

BEACON SERIES

JUNE IN JANUARY

A Farce Comedy in Three Acts

By

JAMES F. STONE



The Willis N. Bugbee Co.

Syracuse, N.Y.

Clara *4*

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THE WILLIS N. BUGBEE CO.

BUGBEE'S BEACON PLAYS

June in January

A FARCE COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

By

JAMES F. STONE

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Ellsworth Anderson
THE WILLIS N. BUGBEE CO.
SYRACUSE, N. Y.

June in January

CAST OF CHARACTERS

INEZ	<i>Sylvia</i>	<i>A Pretty Maid</i>
JACK LANE	<i>Carl</i>	<i>A Hopeful Nephew</i>
OTIS OLEANDER	<i>Ellsworth</i>	<i>A Silent Neighbor</i>
ONA	<i>Bethel</i>	<i>His Talkative Wife</i>
OSCAR LARSON	<i>Kermit</i>	<i>A Bashful Swede</i>
MARMADUKE VAN DELLA	<i>Eugene</i>	<i>A Young Man About Town</i>
JOSE PIETRA	<i>Myron</i>	<i>A Spanish Blade</i>
ETHEL VAN DELLA	<i>Dorothy</i>	<i>A Woman With Money</i>
HAZEL BARLOW	<i>Evelyn</i>	<i>ETHEL'S Friend</i>
JUNE DAY	<i>Virginia</i>	<i>A Girlish Tornado</i>
GRACIE		<i>As Dumb as They Come</i>
DONNA	<i>Phyllis</i>	<i>A Girl From the Casino</i>
JESSIE	<i>Arbelle</i>	<i>A Friend of Them All</i>
ALEXIS	<i>Russell</i>	<i>A Continental Gentleman</i>

All names used in this play are fictitious and do not refer to any person in real life.

SYNOPSIS

The action of the play takes place in the living room of the Van Della Home, Miami, Florida.

ACT ONE

A sunny afternoon in January. About 5:30.

ACT TWO

Before dinner. The same night.

ACT THREE

A few moments later.

TIME: NOW.

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS

JACK LANE. A young, handsome fellow of about twenty-five years of age. Wears white trousers, grey sport coat, white shoes, white shirt and bright tie.

OTIS OLEANDER. A small, weazenened chap about fifty, perhaps younger. He is bald, timid, henpecked. He wears a suit of duck, slightly wrinkled and baggy.

OSCAR LARSEN. A decidedly blonde young man with a round, open face. He is somewhat timid, slow to grasp things, and a chronic pessimist. A neat blonde wig should be worn, and an ill-fitting tuxedo.

MARMADUKE VAN DELLA. A small, foppish young man of about twenty-five. He is stout, red-faced, and his hair is thinning. Dresses in neat-fitting tuxedo and wears glasses.

JOSE PIETRA. Tall, dark and handsome in a Latin way. His manner is bold, he talks confidently and gesticulates continually. Wears tuxedo which fits snugly.

ALEXIS. A good-looking, gentlemanly boy, of about fifteen. He dresses neatly in dark suit, white shirt and flowing tie. He is hatless.

INEZ. A very pretty blonde, about twenty years old. Wears a conventional maid's costume with an immaculate apron.

MRS. OLEANDER. A forward, enterprising busybody. She is a large woman, dressed in expensive attire, but obviously a decade behind the times. Her hair, too, is done in an out-moded fashion. She talks incessantly.

ETHEL VAN DELLA. Good-looking, jolly and large. Wears stylish traveling suit.

HAZEL BARLOW. Slightly obese and about forty-five years of age. She is tastily dressed in a traveling suit.

JUNE DAY. A dark, pretty, vivacious girl of about twenty-two. Dresses in sports or afternoon gown.

GRACIE, DONNA and JESSIE are pretty girls of about the same age—twenty-two. All wear evening gowns. GRACIE is blonde; Donna, titian; JESSIE, dark.

THE STORY OF THE PLAY

When Aunt Ethel, rich and flighty social light, returns to Miami, Florida, after an extended tour of Europe and confesses to an interest in a charming continental gentleman, her nephews, Jack and Marmaduke, become panicky. They set about devising ways and means to put an end to this infatuation. Jack persuades his friend Oscar to shower adoration and attention upon Aunt Ethel. Marmaduke calls upon his friend Don Jose Pietra to do likewise, but when Don Jose arrives Jack and Oscar, believing him to be the foreigner, kidnap him and secret his clothes, hoping to gain time for Oscar's pursuit of Aunt Ethel's affections.

In the meantime, Marmaduke's undercover sweetheart, June, arrives upon the scene with her girl friends from the Casino Club. Donna, the sweetheart of Don Jose, also arrives upon the scene and learns that Don Jose is pursuing the wealthy Aunt Ethel. Now things really begin to happen. But all is happily settled when the continental gentleman arrives and proves to be a charming boy of about twelve. In this play there are many excellent parts and some very amusing comedy furnished by Aunt Ethel and her friend Hazel, Oscar, Don Jose, and the snooping busybodies from next door, Mr. and Mrs. Oleander. Every role means something to the story of the play and affords a chance to appear at one's best.

PROPERTY PLOT

ACT ONE

Large settee. (L.C.)
Carpet on floor.
Table with telephone on it. (R.C.)
Three chairs around table.
Mantel. (R.)
Bric-a-brac on mantel.
Three or four potted plants. (Palms.)
Radio. (U.C.)
End table. (Back of settee.)
Bookcase (U.R.C.)
Pictures on walls.
Bell cord (or push button) on wall right of arch.
Light switch on wall left of window.
Cushions on settee.
Two armchairs.
Flower box. (For INEZ.)
Notebook. (For OSCAR.)
Halltree. (In arch.)
Floor lamp. (Up near radio.)
Vase. (On radio for JACK—to breakaway.)
Telegram. (For JACK.)

ACT TWO

Same as Act One.
Pitcher of water. (Off left, for INEZ.)

ACT THREE

Same.

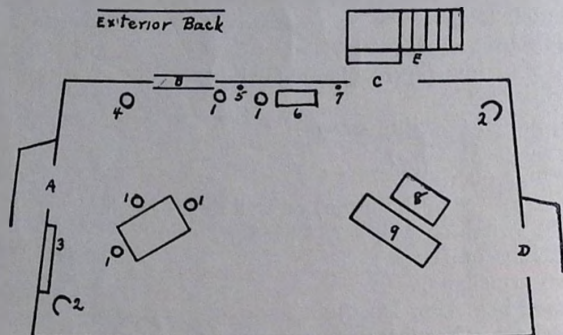
LIGHT PLOT

ACT ONE

Full up. Strong flood in window. (Amber for late afternoon.)

ACTS TWO *and* THREE

Blue medium in window for moonlight.



SCENE PLOT

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1.—Chairs (small) | 5.—Light switch |
| 2.—Arm chairs | 6.—Radio |
| 3.—Mantel | 7.—Bell |
| 4.—Palm | 8.—Table |
| 9.—Settee | |
| A.—Closet | |
| B.—French window | |
| C.—Arch | |
| D.—Door down left | |

June in January

ACT ONE

SCENE: *Living room in the VAN DELLA home, Miami Florida.*

SET: *A large and luxurious room, smartly appointed and brightly decorated. The ceiling is done in pure white, or cream, the walls are tinted apple green, giving the whole an appearance of lightness and gaiety. Down right against the wall is a mantel and fireplace. On the mantel bric-a-brac and a small framed photo. Above the mantel, up-stage, is a small door opening to a clothes closet or dressing room. For this opening a dark backing and no light.*

Above door, obliquing slightly to center, a large French window which leads out to lawn. The window is backed by garden backing. French window, daintily curtained in bright green chintz. Directly center, against the back wall, a radio, small upholstered bench in front of same. Left center a large arch, through which can be seen the stairs leading up and off-stage left. Balustrade to mask stairs. The arch, of course, backed by interior backing to match tone of set. There is an opening leading off in front of stairs. This is the general entrance which leads to front of house. A few small pieces of furniture in arch to decorate.

In the wall left, a door up-stage and another down-stage. Bookcase above door up left.

Left center is a settee, back of same a table with vase of freshly-cut flowers. Right center a small table with French phone (not essentially French) and magazines. Three chairs surround table. In front of the mantel a small sofa, facing mantel. The walls are decorated with a few nicely selected etchings and framed pictures. A soft green carpet covers the floor. Doorbell off left. A bell cord or push button is just right of the arch, on wall. Outside window two ferns or potted palms.

LIGHTS FULL UP.

Amber flood in window to denote sinking sun. Light switch on wall right of window.

AT RISE: JACK LANE, a handsome young fellow, about twenty-five, discovered at table right center using the telephone. He dresses in white trousers, gray sport coat, white shoes, white shirt and bright tie. He listens a moment, then speaks into 'phone.

JACK. Good! And listen, Oscar, don't you dare fail me. I'll explain everything when you get here.

(INEZ enters arch from left. She is about twenty, a very pretty blonde, wears a conventional maid's costume with an immaculate apron.)

JACK (turning, giving her a glance, then speaking in 'phone.) Don't worry, Oscar, just get here as fast as you possibly can. You're going to save my life.

INEZ (coming to center, anxiously.) Is he coming?

JACK (in 'phone). Then borrow a tuxedo—rent one—get one somewhere. Good-bye. (Hangs up, turns to INEZ.) Of course, he's coming. I told him I was desperate. Besides, Oscar needs the money. Oscar always needs money.

INEZ (turning to left). Well—who doesn't? But I hope he can put it over.

JACK. Say—Oscar is dumb enough to put over anything.

INEZ (turning to him, anxiously). Jack—I wish we didn't have to go through all this. I don't like the idea of masquerading as a servant just to win over your aunt. She'll be furious.

JACK. Don't worry about that, Inez. Wait till she gets to really know you. She'll love you. But in the meantime I've got to do something about this chap Alexis. Imagine a woman of her age infatuated with some foreign fortune-hunter! (Turns, crosses right.)

INEZ. Well, I've read about such things in novels, so I suppose it's quite possible.

JACK (with determination). Of course, it is. But I'm going to stop it if it's the last thing I do. Besides—I feel I'm entitled to a share of Aunt Ethel's money. She's my mother's only sister. She owes it to me—because I—well, I've always planned on it.

INEZ. And how about your cousin Marmaduke? What does he think about it?

JACK. Marmaduke *never* thinks. He hasn't had a *thought* since Columbus said, "So this is America?"

INEZ. Let me see that wire again. (JACK *takes telegram from a pocket.*) There's something in it—. (*Takes message, then thoughtfully.*) Hm—(*Reads message.*) "ARRIVED SAFELY TODAY. LOVELY VOYAGE. FLYING TO MIAMI WITH ALEXIS AND HAZEL. LOVE. AUNT ETHEL."

JACK (*taking telegram*). Alexis and Hazel! A couple of European antiques.

INEZ (*with enthusiasm*). But, Jack—maybe it's a break for you. Maybe if we keep our eyes open we can get something on this fortune-hunting Alexis.

JACK (*pacing up and down, nervously*). That's what I intend to do. That's where Oscar comes in. If Auntie wants to hobnob with foreign nobility, I'll give her a chance. I'll tell her Oscar is a descendant of the King of Sweden, or the fifth cousin of Ginsberg the Great. But she's not going to be victimized, if I can help it.

INEZ (*following him up and down*). But Oscar looks like something the cat dragged in.

JACK. Then he's just the type.

INEZ (*as they pace up and down*). But I don't see where Oscar will gain anything. Why should he—

JACK (*interrupting, stops center*). Listen, Inez, Oscar is my friend. He'll do anything for me. Besides, he's indebted to me. I helped him out of a jam once.

INEZ. You did? How?

JACK. He needed money badly and I gave it to him.

INEZ. You did?

JACK. Yes, I gave him a check for two hundred dollars. The check was no good, but it was all the money I had in the world.

WARNING: DOOR BELL

INEZ. But Oscar is so young, Jack. He can't be more than twenty-three and your aunt—

JACK (*interrupting*). Yes, I know. Auntie is no ingenue. But she's only about forty-five, and she loves flattery. All women love flattery.

INEZ (*pouting*). Oh—is that so?

JACK (*consolingly*). Well—you can't help it. You were born that way. (*She laughs lightly.*) There—you see. (*Then, with a change of thought.*) By the way, is the cook on the job?

INEZ. She's up to her neck in spaghetti. (*They both laugh gaily.*)

DOOR BELL (*off left.*)

JACK. That couldn't possibly be Oscar so soon. (*They go to arch.*) Answer the bell, Inez.

INEZ (*forgetting her role*). Me? Why should I answer it? I don't live here.

JACK. But you're supposed to be the maid.

INEZ. Oh, I forgot. (*Starts out left.*) What does a maid say?

JACK. If it's Oscar, don't say anything. Just drag him in here.

INEZ (*with mock politeness*). Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. (*Turns to go and trips over carpet, regains her balance, turns, curtsys and goes out left below stairs.*)

(*JACK looks at his watch, goes over right, nervously runs hand through his hair. Off left, voices are heard.*)

INEZ (*coming to right of arch, ushering in MRS. and MR. OLEANDER*). Right this way, please.

(*MRS. OLEANDER comes on first and goes to center stage. She is a forward, enterprising busybody. She is a large woman, dressed in expensive attire, but obviously a decade behind the times. Her hair, too, is done in an out-moded fashion. She talks incessantly. MR. OLEANDER is a small, wizened chap, about fifty, perhaps younger. He is bald, timid, henpecked. He wears a suit of duck, slightly wrinkled and baggy.*)

MRS. OLEANDER (*gushing, breathlessly*). Oh, Mr. Lane—so sorry to burst in on you like this! (*OLEANDER goes to right end of settee.*) But I heard the news and I rushed right over to see if there was any truth in it. I can hardly wait to see Mrs. Van Della again. She is really returning, isn't she?

JACK (*not obviously happy to see her*). I suppose so. She wired that she would be here tonight.

MRS. OLEANDER. Tonight? (*To Otis.*) Otis, do you hear that? She's arriving tonight.

OTIS (*starting to speak, but she checks him*). I—

MRS. OLEANDER (*to JACK*). Now, isn't that just too divine? I can hardly wait to hear about her trip. You know, we've always wanted to go abroad, but Otis' business keeps him so busy; doesn't it, Otis?

OTIS (*opening his mouth*). I—

MRS. OLEANDER (*quickly*). But we *are* going next year, aren't we, Otis? (*Goes on.*) Yes, indeed, Otis has made up his mind and you know how men are when they set their minds on a thing. (*Laughs sillily.*) Just like mules. But we're taking the trip on our fifteenth anniversary. Oh, yes, we've been married fifteen years now—(*laughing again*) and we're still friends. You'd never think we'd been married that long, to look at us, would you?

JACK (*clearing his throat and looking at OTIS, who returns a sickly smile*). Well—no, not fifteen. (*Looks at INEZ, who holds up both hands, indicating ten years, then quickly holds them up again, and again—as MRS. OLEANDER, following JACK's eyes, turns quickly. INEZ drops her hands and looks to JACK for instructions.*)

(MRS. OLEANDER moves nearer OTIS.)

JACK. That will do, my girl. (*Winks at INEZ, nods his head toward stairs.*)

INEZ (*misunderstanding*). Huh?

JACK (*commandingly*). You may go, my girl.

INEZ. Huh? (*Then, realizing her position.*) Oh, yes, sir. I—er—much obliged. (*Turns and exits arch to left, careful to avoid the rug.*)

MRS. OLEANDER (*nudging OTIS, then with a suspicious tone*). Hm—she's a new girl, isn't she, Mr. Lane?

JACK (*thoughtlessly, turning to left*). No, I've been going with her for a week—(*Checks himself quickly.*) Oh, yes, yes, the maid. She's new—er—brand new. I—er—was thinking of something else.

MRS. OLEANDER (*looking knowingly at OTIS, suspiciously*). Hm—I see. And what time do you expect your aunt?

JACK (*looking at his watch*). Most any moment. She's flying.

MRS. OLEANDER. Well, I *would* like to be here to welcome her. I know how happy it would make her, but I suppose we'd better run along and give her a chance to rest. (*Goes to window.*) Come, Otis. (*He dutifully follows.*) We'll come back later.

JACK (*crossing to left*). Yes, do that. I'm sure Aunt Ethel will be pleased.

MRS. OLEANDER (*at window*). Yes. Ah—(*Curiously.*) Is she bringing anyone with her?

JACK. Why, yes—a friend—I believe.

MRS. OLEANDER. Really? (*To OTIS.*) You see, Otis? The tea leaves never fail me.

JACK. Tea leaves?

MRS. OLEANDER. I read the tea leaves, you know. You'd be surprised what I see in them sometimes. Why, would you believe that before Otis and I were married I foretold in the tea leaves what our future would be? (*Giggles and exits window to right.*)

OTIS (*looking at JACK, unhappily*). But she didn't tell me.

MRS. OLEANDER (*off-stage, loudly*). OTIS!

(*OTIS, jumping at the sound of her voice, quickly exits window to right.*)

(*JACK laughs, as INEZ peers in from arch.*)

INEZ. Have they gone?

JACK (*wiping his brow*). There ought to be a law against people like her. What a business woman!

WARNING: DOOR BELL

INEZ. Is she in business?

JACK. Yes. Everybody's! Always poking her nose in where she isn't wanted. That poor husband of hers ought to have a welcome sign on him. She uses him for a door mat.

WARNING: 'PHONE BELL

INEZ. She acted as though she were suspicious of us.

JACK. She is suspicious of everybody. And she'll be back. You can bet on *that*.

DOOR BELL

JACK. That must be Oscar. Answer it, Inez.

INEZ (*curtsying, quickly exits arch, left*). Yes sir.

'PHONE RINGS

JACK (*picking up 'phone, speaks quickly*). Nobody home—wrong number. (*Bangs down receiver.*)

INEZ (*reappearing, announcing OSCAR*). Mr. Oscar Larsen—the viking from Sweden.

(OSCAR *steps in, stands in arch, looks at INEZ. He is a decidedly blonde young man with a round, open face. He is somewhat timid, slow to grasp things, and a chronic pessimist. A neat blonde wig would not be out of character for him. He wears an ill-fitting tuxedo.*)

OSCAR. Are you nuts?

JACK (*going up, taking OSCAR's hand, dragging him to right center*). Come here, Oscar, and listen quickly.

OSCAR. Listen quickly? (*Looks at INEZ.*) Say—what's she doing in that outfit? What's the matter with her?

JACK. Not a thing. Inez is the new maid here.

OSCAR (*as INEZ bows to him*). I thought she was made up for Alice in Wonderland—or something.

JACK (*speaking rapidly*). Now, listen, Oscar—I'm going to ask you to do something for me.

(OSCAR *looks at him, then turns and starts for arch.*)

JACK (*as they bar his way*). Wait a minute. You haven't heard anything yet.

OSCAR (*center*). You're right. I haven't and I don't want to. What are you trying to put over on me? You must think I'm a perfect fool.

INEZ (*pointedly*). None of us is *perfect*, Oscar.

OSCAR (*thoughtlessly*). Yeah — I know — (*Getting her meaning.*) Huh?

JACK (*placing an arm around him*). Now, just a minute, Oscar. Keep your hair on. (OSCAR *pats his hair down.*) I'm in somewhat of a fix and I want you to help me out.

OSCAR (*uneasily*). Where does Inez come in with that musical comedy costume?

JACK. I'll explain that in time. But first—can I depend on you to stick with me?

OSCAR (*with a touch of sarcasm*). Why, Jack, you know I'd be willing to lay down *your* life for my cause anytime.

JACK. Thanks—and I—(*Stops quickly.*) I'd do as much

for you, too. You know that. What did I do when you first came down here? Didn't I arrange to have the mayor give you the key to the city?

OSCAR. Sure—and the next day he changed all the locks.

INEZ. Oh, Oscar, can't you be serious?

OSCAR. What for? Aren't you both joking? Isn't this some kind of a gag?

JACK (*impatiently*). Please, my dear Mr. Larsen, let me explain.

INEZ. Yes—let him explain.

OSCAR (*to INEZ*). I suppose he explained you into that maid's outfit?

JACK. Listen, Oscar, my aunt is coming home tonight. I want you to meet her. I'm going to tell her you are a descendant of Olaf, the great Norseman, you know, one of the great vikings!

OSCAR (*stupidly*). No, I don't think I've ever met him.

INEZ (*turning to right, disgustedly*). Oh, give him up, Jack. He's a total loss.

OSCAR. I'll be a total wreck if I stay here and listen to you.

JACK. Wait till you hear my plan. My Aunt Ethel is smitten—

OSCAR (*cutting in*). She's *what*?

JACK. She's infatuated with some fortune-hunting foreigner—

OSCAR. What do you want me to do—bump him off?

JACK. No, no; don't you see, Oscar—I've got to do something to break this thing off or I'll be left out in the cold.

OSCAR. Not if you stay down here in Miami—you won't (*Crosses to right of settee.*)

JACK. If this foreigner succeeds in winning Auntie, I stand a good chance of losing my allowance and my inheritance, don't you see?

OSCAR (*trying to fathom it*). There are a great many things I'm very handy at—such as mending broken vases, changing light bulbs, folding napkins, but I never was very adept at riddles. Maybe I'm just dumb.

INEZ (*sarcastically*). Maybe? Ha!

JACK. Well, I'll draw you a blue-print for you. It's very simple—that's why I'm sure you can do it. All you have to do

is make love to my aunt.

(OSCAR *swallows and offers his hand to JACK, JACK takes it, shakes, then OSCAR starts for arch.*)

OSCAR. Good-bye.

JACK and INEZ (*together*). Wait a minute! (*They grab his coat-tail and bring him to center.*)

OSCAR (*pushing away their hands*). Easy on the coat—it isn't paid for. (*To JACK.*) Say—where did you get the idea that *I* was a great lover?

JACK. You won't have to be, if you'll just follow my instructions.

OSCAR (*sarcastically*). If I follow *your* instructions, I'll probably be shot at sunrise.

JACK. You don't have to, really. All you have to do is make a fuss over her, be charming, courteous, attentive and polite.

OSCAR. Ha! Is *that* all? She's pretty, isn't she?

JACK. Pretty what?

OSCAR. Pretty rich. How old is she?

JACK. I don't know exactly. About forty-five, I guess.

OSCAR (*dryly*). Does she walk with a cane?

INEZ (*impatiently*). You're wasting time, Jack. Oscar has all the pent-up emotions of a Frigidaire.

JACK. Now look, Oscar: I'll tell you just what to do—it will be easy.

OSCAR. Yeah—easy for you. Why, I wouldn't know what to say.

INEZ. You know how to flatter a woman, don't you?

OSCAR (*misunderstandingly*). Flatten a wom—. (*Indignantly.*) I never struck a woman in my life.

JACK (*hopelessly*). Oscar, if you do this for me, help me break off this infatuation for this foreigner, there isn't anything I wouldn't do for you.

INEZ (*warningly*). Ah—ah—don't promise too much.

OSCAR (*with a hopeful thought*). But maybe she won't like me.

INEZ (*jokingly*). Oh, Oscar, you're too modest. How could she resist you?

OSCAR (*seriously*). Well—there is something in that.

JACK (*eagerly*). She'll like you all right—if you just make

a fuss over her. I know Auntie. She loves attention, she's very affectionate.

OSCAR. That's what I'm afraid of. (*Giving in.*) Well—you'll have to coach me—write out some instructions for me. I've got to know how to court a lady before I begin.

INEZ. And when you do begin, she'll probably hand you a lollypop and send you home. (*Laughs.*)

JACK (*stopping her*). Look, Oscar, I'll show you what to do. I'll demonstrate. You can practice on Inez. (*INEZ is smiling, but her jaw drops suddenly.*)

OSCAR (*with a glance at INEZ*). Well, Auntie can't be any worse.

INEZ (*sarcastically, pointing to Oscar*). Ha! The Sizzling Swede from Sandusky.

JACK. All right, Oscar, go ahead. Just imagine Inez is Auntie.

OSCAR (*looking at her, then laughing, but none too gaily*). This is going to be very funny—or awfully sad.

INEZ (*standing center*). Well—put your arms around me.

OSCAR (*foolishly*). I—er—(*Starts to embrace her, laughs foolishly, then draws away.*)

JACK. No, not that way. Simply walk up to her—(*illustrating*)—take her hand and raise it to your lips.

OSCAR. And bite the hand that's feeding me?

JACK (*holding INEZ' hand*). No, no, you're going to kiss her hand—. (*He bows, kisses her hand.*)

OSCAR. Suppose she's wearing gloves?

JACK (*ignoring him, goes on*). Then you say, "Let us take a stroll in the moonlight—"

OSCAR. But suppose it's raining?

INEZ (*dropping on settee, hopelessly*). Oh—let it rain.

JACK. Just watch me and do as I do. (*Goes to INEZ, kisses her hand, gallantly.*) "Won't you take a stroll in the moonlight with me? Nothing is more inspiring, more romantic than Miami in the moonlight!" (*To OSCAR.*) Then you take her arm and stroll nonchalantly out on the beach. Later—when you are alone—you kneel on bended knee—.

OSCAR. I borrowed these trousers—.

JACK (*going on, as he kneels beside INEZ*). Then you say,

"Madame, your charms remind me of the stately ladies of old—."

OSCAR (*with a sudden thought*). Wait a minute. (*Takes notebook and pencil from a pocket.*) Let me write that down. All right, go ahead.

JACK. All right, if you must take notes. (*Continues.*) Then say something like this: "Fair lady, you have completely captivated me."

OSCAR (*crying out suddenly*). OH!

INEZ. What's the matter now?

OSCAR (*horrified at the thought*). But suppose she accepts me?

JACK. You haven't proposed to her.

OSCAR (*relieved*). Oh—haven't I? What a relief.

JACK. No. You are a gentleman of the old world. You are simply and purely a gay cavalier.

INEZ (*pointedly*). With the accent on the simple.

JACK (*going on rapidly*). Why—it's only natural for you to be attentive. Who knows? Auntie might even adopt you.

OSCAR (*stupidly*). But what would my mother say?

INEZ (*hopelessly*). Oh, Jack, why did you pick him? He'll never make it.

JACK. Yes he will, if he just follows my instructions.

OSCAR (*making notes in book*). "Fair lady, you have completely capsized me—."

JACK (*interrupting*). Captivated! (*Turns OSCAR about to face INEZ.*) Here now—try it out on Inez—exactly as you saw me do it.

OSCAR (*with one eye on the book*). All right, but don't watch me. It makes me nervous.

JACK (*going up in arch*). I'll stand back here. Now go ahead.

WARNING: DOOR BELL

OSCAR. Ah—er—Fair Lady, er—(*Glances at book.*) you—ah—(*looking at book, kneels*)—you charm my bended knee—.

JACK. No, no, your charms remind me of the stately ladies of old!

OSCAR (*as OTIS and ONA appear at window, unseen. They stand there, staring*). Your — charms remind me of the

stately ladies of old. (*Kisses her hand briefly and quickly, makes a wry face.*)

(MRS. OLEANDER *suppresses a scream, quickly grabs OTIS and pulls him off right.*)

JACK (*coming down right center*). Ah—that's better.

OSCAR (*wiping his lips*). Bitter is right.

DOOR BELL (*off left*.)

JACK. There's someone at the door. Inez, see who it is. (*She goes to arch quickly.*) Come along, Oscar. (*JACK goes up to arch, OSCAR follows him, eyeing book and absent-mindedly walking on his knees.*) Get up, Oscar. We'll go to my room. I'll rehearse you again. Come on. (*INEZ goes out arch to left.*)

OSCAR (*getting to his feet*). Say, Jack, how much money is your aunt worth?

JACK (*rapidly going upstairs*). Millions! Millions! (*He exits up.*)

OSCAR (*looking at notebook*). Millions! (*Quickly glances at book, goes upstairs rapidly reading passages from book.*) Your charms remind me of the stately ladies of old—let's take a stroll in the moonlight—on bended knee—. (*He goes.*)

(MARMADUKE VAN DELLA *enters French window from right. He is followed by JOSE PIETRA. MARMADUKE is a small, foppish young man of about twenty-five. He is stout, red-faced and his hair is thinning. Dresses in neat-fitting tuxedo, wears glasses. JOSE is tall, dark, and handsome in a Latin way. He also wears tuxedo which fits snugly. His manner is bold, he talks confidently, and gesticulates continually.*)

MARMADUKE (*speaking as they enter and come to center*). Come right in, Jose. I suppose cousin Jack is around somewhere.

JOSE (*strutting confidently to center, looking around the room*). Ah—what a beautifuls place dees is! So! (*Laughs gaily.*) For de doubtful pleasure of making de love to de aunt I am de guest of honor in dees so lovely hacienda. No?

MARMADUKE (*looking around uneasily*). No—I mean yes. But before you meet her I want you to understand her temperament. You see, she is a woman—

JOSE (*cutting in, going left*). She is a woman? No?

Donkey! I did not think she was otherwise. And, being a woman, Don Jose Pietra understands her. Jose Pietra understands all women. It is so in de history of my family. Does not de blood of de ancient cavaliers flow through my veins? (*He strikes a heroic pose.*)

MARMADUKE (*nervously, as he goes right*). I don't know anything about your blood, but I know my aunt.

(*INEZ comes in from left in arch with a large box containing flowers. She takes in the scene, suppresses an exclamation and goes quickly and noiselessly up the stairs.*)

JOSE (*speaking as INEZ goes up*). And I know myself. (*Pounds his chest.*) I know dat in all dees country there is not one so much possessed of de red corpuscles as dees one—(*Patting his chest.*)—to whom you are so honored to speak, dees Don Jose Pietra. No?

MARMADUKE. No—(*checking himself*) I mean yes. But I wish you'd forget about your corpuscles for a moment. I tell you I'm in a jam.

JOSE (*explosively*). You are in de jam? Ha, I am in de soup! I am without funds. What do you think of dat?

MARMADUKE. Well, I've explained it all to you. You know what to do. And if you succeed in putting an end to my aunt's infatuation for this foreigner, I'll pay you well.

JOSE (*scornfully*). Bah! Dees foreigners! Dey should be sent back where we come from. But, my fran, I will do as you say—ahem—for a monetary consideration. No?

MARMADUKE (*going to him, left center*). Good. You see, Jose, I've got to do something about June, too. If my aunt finds out that I've been running around with a girl from the Casino—I'll be ostracized.

JOSE (*turning to left*). But wait! (*Turns back to MARMADUKE.*) Suppose dees aunt she fall in love wid Don Jose Pietra? What den?

MARMADUKE. I don't think there's any danger of that.

JOSE (*indignantly, swelling up*). I am not so sure—not so sure. I have made de hearts of too many senioritas beat like de babbling brook in de springtime, no?

MARMADUKE (*puzzled*). Like the babbling brook? (*JOSE illustrates by doing a few steps of a spring dance, spreading*

flowers from an imaginary basket.)

JOSE (*dancing around the settee to center*). You see? Tra-la-la—de flowers dat bloom—.

MARMADUKE (*quickly stopping him, looking around fearfully*). Yes, yes, I know, Jose. You can go into your dance later. Now, you're sure you know how to act?

JOSE (*indignantly*). Are you mad? Such a question you ask Jose Pietra! Have I not laid my heart and hand at de feets of hundreds of de proud senoritas? And you ask me dees. Look—I show you. (*He quickly kneels, grabs MARMADUKE's hand, with an arm outstretched.*) Ah—senorita! (*JACK and OSCAR start downstairs, followed by INEZ. They take in the scene and stand motionless, staring.*) Dees is de moment I have long wait for—dees is de hour my heart has pine for. Every moment of de day, every minute of de hour, have I watched you from a distance, always I have carry your image in my heart. For one smile, one word of affection from your ruby lips, I would lay my life at your feets! (*Kisses his hand. JACK, OSCAR and INEZ stare wide-eyed, mouths agape.*)

MARMADUKE (*pulling his hand away*). Never mind my feets—hand.

JOSE (*carried away by his own fervor*). You are my angel—my ideal—my inspiration! In my humbleness, I beg for de one word of encouragement. Senorita, speak a kind word—or leave me forever—.

MARMADUKE (*backing away, uneasily*). I guess I'll leave—.

JOSE (*grabbing his hand again, fiercely*). No, no, no! If you do, I swear I will keel myself. (*JACK, OSCAR and INEZ start to tiptoe back upstairs, MARMADUKE starts to speak.*) Wait! (*JACK, OSCAR and INEZ stop suddenly, thinking he is speaking to them; they stand motionless.*) Do you not know dat de blood of de ancient Spanish dons flows in my veins? Do you know dat?

MARMADUKE (*hesitantly*). I—I—knew there was something wrong—.

JOSE. Then speak—say you will be mine!

MARMADUKE. Don't you think that's a little strong?

JOSE (*rising*). What? You dare challenge de word of de Spanish cavalier? Very well, den I will go. (*Turns toward window right, as JACK, OSCAR and INEZ quickly dash upstairs,*

OSCAR *slipping and JACK falling over him.*)

JOSE (*turning to MARMADUKE*). Hah! What was dat?

(*JACK and OSCAR exeunt without being seen.*)

MARMADUKE (*going to door down left*). Somebody must be coming. Come in here, Jose, I've got to talk to you before Auntie arrives. I've got to cool off your blood a little.

JOSE (*crossing to left near MARMADUKE*). Ah—lead de way, my fran, but don't forget de dollars—de monetary consideration. Jose must have funds.

MARMADUKE (*going out left*). No, no, I won't forget. Come on.

JOSE (*following him off, strutting majestically*). After all—de blood of de Spanish cavalier is worth something, no?

(*JACK, OSCAR and INEZ tiptoe cautiously downstairs, looking toward left.*)

JACK. That settles it. (*Comes to right center, OSCAR to center and INEZ to left center.*) We're lost. Auntie's foreigner something-or-other is here already. He's in there with Marmaduke.

OSCAR. What was he doing—practicing?

INEZ. Say—I'll bet those flowers I just took upstairs were from that guy.

JACK (*speaking softly*). I think I'm beginning to see through it now. Marmaduke is behind all this. He's in league with him. He *knows* this—this Spanish what-you-may-call-it.

OSCAR (*taking out book*). Well, I won't need this now. (*Starts to throw it out window.*)

JACK (*stopping him*). Wait a minute. If we can just keep this fellow out of the way until after Auntie meets you, Oscar—.

OSCAR (*interrupting*). What chance would I have with that comic opera blood of de Spanish onion? He eats 'em alive. (*Goes up center.*)

JACK (*going up, bringing OSCAR down center*). Listen: After what I heard, I'm sure he's after Auntie's money.

OSCAR (*sarcastically*). And, of course, we are not.

JACK (*with determination*). We got to get him out of the way—that's all.

INEZ. I agree with you.

OSCAR. Well—there's carbolic acid, strychnine—.

JACK (*speaking rapidly*). No, no, that's too expensive. (*Snaps his fingers.*) I have it!

OSCAR (*startled*). Well, don't give it to me.

JACK. Wait, listen—.

(JOSE *enters door down left, stops upon seeing them, smiles pleasantly.*)

JOSE. Ah—buenas noches.

OSCAR (*after a slight pause as they look from one to the other*). Well—(*laughing lightly*)—ha, we're in the same boat.

JOSE (*stepping to center*). Pardon, Senorita, Senors? Friends of de family, no? Or perhaps some of de family, no?

JACK (*as they all hesitate uneasily*). Ah—no.

INEZ. No, no.

OSCAR (*not to be outdone*). A thousand times no.

JOSE (*crossing to 'phone on table*). No? Yes. You will excuse me, yes? An important call, no. (*Turns to pick up 'phone.*

JACK *goes up to radio, center, gets vase, comes down behind*

JOSE. JOSE *at table, JACK left of him, OSCAR center and INEZ left of OSCAR. JACK winks at OSCAR and nods toward JOSE.*)

Hello, (*Speaking in 'phone.*) Senorita Central? I want a number.

OSCAR (*trying to be facetious*). Take a number from one to ten—(*Laughs uneasily, but ceases when JOSE turns to glare at him.*)

JOSE (*in 'phone*). Give me Hurricane-ought-o-double-ought ought O.

(JACK *taps JOSE on head lightly with the vase, which crumbles, turns, hands bottom part of vase to OSCAR, steps around behind OSCAR to INEZ.*)

JOSE. Caramba! (*Holds his head, groans, turns and sees OSCAR, stupidly holding the vase.*)

(OSCAR, *frightened, smiles wanly at JOSE, then, confused, hands him the vase.*)

OSCAR. Here!

JOSE (*with rising fury*). Chili con carne and frijoles!

OSCAR (*backing away slightly*). It wasn't me.

JACK (*indignantly*) Oscar, are you going to stand there and take that?

JOSE (*seemingly stunned, rubs his head*). Caramba!

OSCAR. Carioca!

JACK (*stepping between them*). Senor, you have grossly insulted my friend. You will give him satisfaction at once.

OSCAR (*quickly*). No, no, I'm satisfied.

JOSE (*placing broken vase on table*). Bah! You have aroused de blood of de—

JACK (*quickly slaps him, then steps behind him, pins his arms*). Take that, senor!

JOSE. Caramba—and leetle fishes—.

INEZ. Oscar, do something!

JOSE. Let me go—let me go—.

(OSCAR *rushes to help JACK, as JACK places a hand over JOSE's mouth. They struggle, ad libbing to door up right.*)

OSCAR. Everything happens to me.

JACK. Inez, open that door, quick.

(INEZ *rushes up right, opens closet door and all three men struggle as they disappear inside, JOSE muttering something unintelligible.*)

INEZ (*hurrying back to center, as there is a crash in closet, and then then a loud thud*). Oh!

(OSCAR *enters and goes to center. His hair is standing on end, his tie awry, and his collar open. He rubs an injured jaw. JACK follows him on immediately, locking closet door. He has JOSE's trousers in his hand.*)

OSCAR. Say—is this your idea of a good time? Why didn't you hold him?

JACK. Don't ask silly questions now. We've got to keep him there. (*Offers trousers.*) Here, take these.

OSCAR (*looking at them*). What are they?

JACK. His trousers.

OSCAR (*stupidly*). But I've got a pair. I don't—.

JACK (*crossing to INEZ*). Here, Inez, hide them somewhere.

OSCAR (*gesturing toward closet*). What'll we do with the body?

INEZ (*suppressing a scream*). Oh—you didn't kill him?

WARNING: DOOR BELL

JACK. No, he's just taking a short nap.

OSCAR (*caressing his jaw*). And he almost took me with him.

JACK (*speaking rapidly*). We've got to watch our chance and get him out of the house before Auntie gets here.

INEZ. But where shall we take him?

JACK. I don't know. Anywhere—away from here. Now, look—

CAR—DOOR BELL

JACK. That must be Auntie. She's coming.

OSCAR (*starts for window*). I'm going.

JACK (*holding him*). You are not. Inez, go to the door. Oscar, quick, upstairs. Wash your hair and comb your face.

(INEZ stands holding trousers, looks wildly around for a place to hide them.)

DOOR BELL

(She dashes to arch and off left, tucking the trousers under her apron, but one leg hangs down, dragging the floor. JACK and OSCAR go upstairs, talking as they go.)

JACK. Now, don't forget. Do just as I've told you and you can't go wrong.

OSCAR (*as they go up*). Oh, yes, wash my hair and comb my face—no, I can't go wrong. (*They go.*)

(INEZ enters from arch with JUNE DAY. JUNE is dark, pretty, vivacious. About twenty-two, dresses in sports, or afternoon gown.)

INEZ. Why — June! Imagine meeting you here! (JUNE comes to left center, looking around.) What's the big idea?

JUNE. The big idea is a chubby little chap who answers to the name of Marmaduke Van Della. I call him Marmy in my weaker moments. But what's the big idea of the costume you're wearing?

INEZ. I'm the new maid here.

JUNE. You a maid? (*Laughs.*) Pardon me while I indulge in a bit of idle laughter.

INEZ (*looking around cautiously, then confidentially*). Well, I can't tell you all about it now, June, but I will later. Just

promise you won't give me away. It's a secret.

WARNING: DOOR BELL

JUNE. You know me, Inez. I can keep a secret in four different languages. You're safe. But, tell me, where is my little playmate, Marmy? He does live here, doesn't he?

INEZ (*leading her to door down left*). He should be in there, but if he is, he must be dead. There's been so much going on here I can't imagine anyone not hearing it. Did he invite you here?

JUNE (*laughing*). Not while he was conscious. Not Marmy. That's why I'm here. I know his aunt is coming home tonight and I know he doesn't want me to know. So I'm going to surprise them both. I'm going to have some fun—and how! Wait till you see that rascal squirm. I'll have him in so much hot water he'll think he's hard-boiled. (*Laughs.*)

INEZ (*laughing with her*). June, you're priceless.

DOOR BELL

ETHEL VAN DELLA (*off-stage left, calling*). Hello—anybody home?

(*Door slams and* ETHEL *and* HAZEL BARLOW *heard ad libbing off left.*)

INEZ. That must be Auntie. Quick, June, in there. I've got to answer the bell. (*Goes to arch.*)

JUNE. Wait till Auntie sees me. (*Exits left, laughing.*)

JACK (*coming quickly downstairs, calling off left*). Hello, Auntie!

(*INEZ goes out left to meet her.*)

(*ETHEL comes in immediately, dressed in stylish traveling suit. She is good-looking, jolly, and large. She is followed by* HAZEL BARLOW, *who is about forty-five, slightly obese, tastily dressed in a traveling suit. ETHEL comes to center of stage, takes off her hat, places it on radio.*)

ETHEL. Why, Jack, dear. (*Meets him center, they embrace. INEZ stands up near arch, HAZEL goes down to front of settee.*) Thank you, dear, for getting the house in order. Oh, dear, I'm a wreck. What a relief to be home again where I know it's always quiet and peaceful! (*Turns to* HAZEL.) Sit down, dear.

HAZEL (*flopping wearily on settee*). Gladly. I'll take off

my hat, too, (*Does so, places it beside her on settee.*)

ETHEL. Hazel, this is my nephew, Jack. Mrs. Hazel Barlow. We met in Paris.

JACK (*bowing*). How do you do?

HAZEL (*sighing wearily*). Well, I have felt better. (*Smiles at him.*)

ETHEL (*turning to INEZ, seeming to notice her for the first time*). Tell the boy to take our luggage up, please.

INEZ. Yes, ma'am. (*Starts to go.*)

ETHEL. Oh, you're new here, aren't you? I don't seem to remember—

JACK (*interrupting*). Yes, Auntie, she's new. I—I engaged her.

ETHEL (*to INEZ*). You may go. (*She goes out arch to left.*) Of course, Jack, if you engaged her. She's very pretty.

JACK. She's a jewel. You'll love her.

ETHEL (*suspiciously*). My boy, you're a great help to—ahem—you.

JACK (*grinning sheepishly, then casually*). Ah — you're looking splendid, Auntie.

ETHEL (*patting her hair in place*). None of that boloney, Jack. I look like something from a fire sale. Well, where's circulating cupid, Marmaduke? Why isn't he here?

JACK (*uneasily*). He was here with your—(*stopping quickly*)—ah—he was here. He must have stepped out.

ETHEL (*laughing*). Stepped out? That's the best thing he does—with anybody.

HAZEL. Oh—that's the nephew you were telling me about?

ETHEL (*going up center*). Wait till you see him. He's a future museum piece. (*Comes down to JACK.*) Anyone else here?

JACK (*nervously, with a side glance at closet door*). Huh? Anyone else? Oh—you mean anyone else? (*Laughs uneasily.*) No, no, I—I—

ETHEL. What's the matter with you? What are you stuttering about?

JACK. Why, it's—it's because I'm so glad to see you.

ETHEL. Don't be so glad. You give me the jitters. I came home for a rest—and I'm going to have a rest.

(JOSE, in closet, is heard faintly yelling for help. JACK quickly tries to cover it up, talks and moves until he is almost executing a tango dance.)

JOSE. Help—(muffled)—help!

HAZEL (turning to JACK). What's that?

JACK (laughing half-heartedly and dancing around foolishly). Ha, ha—oh, that. (Sings in off key.) "HELP yourself to another piece of pie—" (They stare at him in amazement.)

ETHEL (stepping to center). JACK LANE! Have you lost your mind?

JACK (hastily). No, no, Auntie, you see, I—I'm so overjoyed at seeing you, I just feel like dancing. (Glances toward closet door.)

HAZEL (laughing). This is positively devastating.

ETHEL (with growing suspicion). Hm—it's worse than that. (Turns to HAZEL.) Well, dear, don't you think we should freshen up a bit? Possibly Alexis will call tonight. (To JACK.) I wrote about Alexis, didn't I?

JACK (uneasily). Not all about him.

ETHEL. He's a darling, a precious dear.

HAZEL. So refined and so quiet.

JACK (who is throwing a glance at door right). Yes, he is now—. (Checks himself quickly.)

ETHEL. And what do you think? He's in Miami now.

JACK (thoughtlessly). Yes—I know—

ETHEL (quickly). You know?

JACK. Yes, you wired, don't you remember?

ETHEL. Oh, yes. I'm wild about the boy. Wait till you see him?

JACK (half to himself). Wait till you see him—

ETHEL. What's that?

JACK. Nothing, Auntie. I was just thinking. You see, I'm—somewhat upset, because I've planned a little surprise for you and I'm not sure how you'll take it—him.

ETHEL. A surprise—for me?

JACK. Yes. I have a guest with me tonight. A very distinguished friend of mine. I—I want you to meet him. He comes from a very old family.

ETHEL. Old? Well, wheel him in. Let me take a look at him. (JACK looks over his shoulder at closet door.) Is he in there? (Starts for door right.)

JACK (in a panic). No, no. (Stands in front of her.) He—he's upstairs. He's a peculiar sort of a person. He's a Swede, comes from Norway, I think.

ETHEL. Well, that isn't his fault.

HAZEL (laughing). And you came home for a rest, eh, Ethel?

(MARMADUKE enters door down left with JUNE, goes center to AUNTIE. JUNE stands near door.)

MARMADUKE. Auntie!

ETHEL. Marmaduke Van Della, my baby Tarzan. (They embrace.)

MARMADUKE. So sorry, Auntie, I didn't hear you come in. I must have dropped off to sleep.

ETHEL. I'm sure you did. It's just an old Van Della custom. Well, we won't keep you awake long. Haven't you forgotten something?

MARMADUKE. Huh? Oh—(Kisses her, she looks toward JUNE.)

ETHEL. No, my boy, but didn't you bring something in with you?

MARMADUKE (following her eyes). Oh, yes, yes. I—er—that is, this is Miss June Day, my Aunt.

ETHEL (eyeing her suspiciously). Hm—.

JUNE. How do you do? (Uncertainly.) I—I was just going.

ETHEL. Must you? Well, it's been nice knowing you.

JUNE (crossing to center). Oh, I'll be back. Yes, I'm going to change. Marmy says he's giving a sort of a surprise party for you. (Laughs.)

ETHEL (with a hopeless glance at HAZEL). The shock will kill me. (MARMADUKE is miserable.)

JUNE (goes to window). Well, bye-bye. I'll be running along. But I'll be back soon. Wait for me, Marmy. (Laughs and goes out window to right.)

ETHEL (eyeing MARMADUKE suspiciously). Well, Marmy, you certainly can pick 'em.

MARMADUKE (hastening to explain). Now, Aunt Ethel,

she's just a friend. I don't know her very well. She—she—just dropped in to say good-bye—I mean hello. I couldn't turn her out.

ETHEL. No, you couldn't. You were always so soft-hearted with the girls. (*To HAZEL.*) It looks like we came home just in time for the Old Settlers' Picnic. Jack, ring for the maid. We'll go to our rooms.

MARMADUKE (*as JACK goes up to ring, ETHEL crossing to HAZEL*). I didn't see you come in, Jack.

JACK (*pointedly*). I know you didn't. (*Rings.*)

HAZEL (*rises, goes to left and up-stage*). Something tells me I'm going to enjoy Miami.

INEZ (*appearing at arch*). Did you rang—cr—ring?

ETHEL. Yes, we'll go to our rooms.

(INEZ starts upstairs followed by HAZEL, JACK goes right.)

MARMADUKE (*solicitously*). I'll see that you're made comfortable, Auntie. (*Goes to arch.*)

ETHEL (*pointedly*). Yes, but not for long, I'm sure.

(INEZ goes, followed by MARMADUKE.)

JACK. But, Auntie, I want you to meet Oscar.

ETHEL (*turning to him, as HAZEL hesitates in arch*). Oscar? What in the world is Oscar—a police dog?

JACK. Oscar is the Swedish nobleman I was telling you about. He's a descendant of the old Norse Vikings—. I thought he'd be down. (*Glances anxiously toward stairs.*) He's—dressing, you know.

MRS. OLEANDER *enters breezily through window, followed by OTIS.*)

MRS. OLEANDER. Oh, Mrs. Van Della—(*Rushes center to greet her, ETHEL visibly droops at sight of her, suppressing a groan.*) I hope you don't mind our coming right over. But I saw you pull up a while ago and I said to Otis, I said, "Otis, let's go over and give Mrs. Van Della a rousing reception." And here we are. How are you, dear? My, you must be completely worn out after your long journey. I understand you flew down from New York. What courage! Otis won't let me fly. He says it's taking too much of a chance. (*Takes a quick breath.*) Well, well, well, aren't you glad to be home again—back to your own nest where everything is so quiet and peaceful?

ETHEL (*exchanging glances with HAZEL*). Well, I was glad—.

MRS. OLEANDER (*turning to OTIS, who stands slightly up-stage*). You remember my husband, don't you? (*Giggles.*) Yes, it's the same one. I've had him for fifteen years now. I always say one good husband is worth a dozen—(*Struggles for the words.*) er — ha — ahem — well, worth a dozen. (*Laughs.*)

ETHEL. Hazel, this is MRS. and Mr. Oleander, neighbors. Mrs. Hazel Barlow.

(*They exchange greetings.*)

MRS. OLEANDER (*crossing to settee and sitting beside HAZEL, and on her hat*). We can't stay long. We just dropped in for a minute—(*Rises, looks at hat, picks it up.*) Oh, I believe I sat on someone's hat.

HAZEL (*looking at it, then at ETHEL*). Hm—yes. I'm sure you did.

(MRS. OLEANDER *places hat further to the left on sofa, turns to HAZEL, sits again.*)

MRS. OLEANDER (*straightening out hat*). There. Now, well, Mrs. Van Della, I don't suppose you feel much like entertaining on your first night home. (*Laughs foolishly.*)

ETHEL (*as OTIS crosses back around settee, comes down left of it and sits on settee, and on HAZEL's hat*). Well, I am a little tired, but I like to have friends.

(OTIS, *as he sits, gives a little cry, rises, takes hat and holds it up for others to see.*)

HAZEL (*looking at it and taking it*). Yes, I see. You believe you sat on my hat. (*Puts it on her head, and as it is dented it sits on the top of her head. She looks straight front.*)

ETHEL (*to HAZEL, jokingly*). Aren't you glad you came, dear?

MRS. OLEANDER (*to OTIS*). Why, Otis, how stupid of you! Do be more careful. (*Turns to others.*) Imagine such carelessness.

(OSCAR *starts downstairs, sees them congregated, pan-*

icky, turns and starts up again as INEZ appears behind, gives him a push and he comes down. She steps to arch.)

INEZ (*announcing*). Mr. Oscar Larsen!

JACK. Ah—here's Oscar now, Auntie. (*OSCAR comes timidly to center, a little up-stage.*)

ETHEL. Well, well, so this is Oscar!

POSITIONS

INEZ

JACK ETHEL OSCAR HAZEL MRS. O. OTIS

HAZEL. The Swede!

OSCAR. I—er—(*Stutters, starts fumbling in his pockets.*)
ah—I—(*Remembers JOSE and buenas noches*). Ah—buenas
noches.

HAZEL. Did you say he was descended from a pirate?

JACK. Oh, no, no, a viking. (*OSCAR is now frantically searching his pockets.*)

ETHEL (*crossing to HAZEL at left center*). Oh, yes, yes, the vikings.

OSCAR (*frantically, aside, to JACK*). I've lost the book—.

JACK (*his knees giving way a little, meanwhile looking at him in despair*). Then it's every man for himself. (*Gives OSCAR a little push toward center.*)

HAZEL. Oscar, won't you tell us about Sweden—and your ancestors?

(*MRS. OLEANDER is nudging OTIS and whispering to him as they both strain to hear and see all.*)

OSCAR (*wiping his brow*). Well, (*Laughs uncomfortably.*)
I'd—I'd rather follow the instructions. (*Glances back at JACK.*)

JACK (*trying to whisper to him as the others exchange glances*). Fair lady—.

OSCAR (*brightly*). Oh, yes. (*Crosses deliberately to HAZEL.*)
Fair lady. (*Takes her hand.*)

HAZEL (*taken aback*). Oh!

(*OSCAR, bowing, kisses her hand with a loud smack.*)

MRS. OLEANDER (*nudging OTIS, he grunting and sitting up straight*). Otis—look!

HAZEL (*a little breathlessly*). My, my, how charming!

(ETHEL watches, speechless.)

OSCAR (*without thinking*). Yeah, that's what the book says.

JACK (*trying to signal him*). Ahem—(OSCAR turns, but does not understand that JACK is trying to convey that he is not talking to AUNTIE.)

OSCAR (*turning to HAZEL, offers his arm*). Won't you take a stroll in the moonlight? Nothing is more romantic than the Miami moonlight in the moon—. (*They stroll toward the window as ETHEL goes up-stage center, MRS. OLEANDER and OTIS watch spell-bound. JACK goes up to near closet door, vainly trying to catch OSCAR's eye.*) Fair lady, you remind me of a stately old lady—.

HAZEL (*indignantly*). What?

(JOSE pounds loudly on closet door and shouts for help in a muffled voice, JACK quickly backs to door and begins to dance again, singing in off key. OSCAR and HAZEL go out. ETHEL grabs the radio for support.)

JACK (*dancing*). HELP yourself to another piece of pie—. HELP yourself—.

CURTAIN

June in January

ACT TWO

SETTING: *The same as ACT ONE.*

TIME: *About an hour later.*

AT RISE: INEZ is discovered over right at the closet door, listening, her ear very near the keyhole. Blue medium in window to denote moonlight. ETHEL comes downstairs, followed by HAZEL. They are both wearing evening gowns, and shawls. ETHEL speaks as she comes down.)

ETHEL. I'll show you the garden tomorrow, dear. (INEZ straightens, goes quickly toward arch.) That is, if you survive tonight's festivities. (Meets INEZ, as HAZEL goes to left center.) Oh, what is your name, my girl?

INEZ. Inez, Ma'am.

ETHEL. Oh, yes. Well, Inez, Mrs. Barlow and I are going down to the beach. You'll find a wrap in that closet there—will you please get it for me? (She points to door up right.)

INEZ (nervously). Y—yes, Ma'am. (Starts toward door.) I—in there?

ETHEL. Certainly. (Turns to HAZEL, as INEZ makes her way to door, uncertainly.)

(INEZ unlocks closet door, breathlessly.)

HAZEL (crossing up to window and looking off). It's beautiful out there to-night, Ethel. It seems silly to take a wrap. Besides, you have your shawl. (Both are wearing Spanish shawls.)

ETHEL (going to window, as INEZ fumbles with door and unlocks it). Perhaps you're right, dear. (Turns to INEZ.) Never mind, Inez. I'm sure I won't need it.

(INEZ relieved, leans weakly against door, ETHEL and HAZEL look out window, as JOSE, in closet, pushes on door.)

ETHEL (starting out). Come, dear. (Turns to speak to INEZ, just as the latter stumbles to center from the force of JOSE's push against door.) Inez!

INEZ (*regaining her balance*). Y—yes, Ma'am.

ETHEL. What in the world is wrong?

INEZ (*nervously*). I—I'm—just a little giddy, I think. I'm all right.

ETHEL (*exchanging looks with HAZEL*). I wonder if anybody is right in this house. That will do. You may go, Inez.

INEZ (*eyeing the closet door, fearfully*). But—I—er—yes, Ma'am. (*She goes to arch, casting a glance at door, having left it unlocked.*)

HAZEL (*as INEZ goes out arch to left*). Poor girl, she seems to be unbalanced.

ETHEL (*as they saunter off right*). I don't feel so good myself—.

(INEZ *peers in from arch, quickly comes to center, looking off window, then to closet, reaches for key to lock door when MARMADUKE enters arch from right.*)

MARMADUKE (*coming center*). That's not the way!

INEZ (*startled, almost drops in her tracks, as she turns to face him*). OH!

MARMADUKE (*solicitously*). Oh—sorry I frightened you. I meant to say—that's not the way out. Just a small closet and dressing room, you know.

INEZ (*catching her breath*). Oh—yes, yes. I—I—I'm sorry.

MARMADUKE (*as she crosses toward arch*). Don't apologize. You're new here—you couldn't be expected to know. (*Going to her, flirtatiously.*) But you'll learn. (*Laughs.*) A pretty girl like you would be an asset to any home.

INEZ (*smiling*). Oh, thank you, sir.

MARMADUKE (*taking her hand*). You're much too pretty for a maid. (ETHEL and HAZEL *appear at window, stop at the sound of his voice.*) I don't think I've ever seen such beautiful hands. Now, you take—(*Sees ETHEL out of the corner of his eye.*)—er—ah—you take MY hands—.

ETHEL (*coming to center*). Hm—. (*Watches him while he tries to cover his embarrassment.*)

MARMADUKE. I—er—could do with a manicure—. (*Examines his hands.*)

ETHEL. You could do with a major operation, my

boy. (*To INEZ.*) You may go. (*INEZ exits arch, timidly.*) So you think you have beautiful hands?

HAZEL (*laughing at Marmaduke's embarrassment while he gropes for words*). What can you do with them—crochet?

MARMADUKE (*stuttering*). Why—I—er—I was just a—just—a—.

ETHEL. Oh, stop stuttering. You don't have to invent excuses for me. I know all about you.

MARMADUKE. Why, Auntie, I wasn't trying to. It's just that I—I'm worried about Jose.

HAZEL (*laughing*). HO—say can you see?

MARMADUKE (*going on, rapidly*). I—want you to meet him. That's why I invited him here.

ETHEL (*impatiently*). Well, where is he?

MARMADUKE. That's what I can't understand. (*JOSE opens closet door a crack, peers out, unnoticed by others, sees them, quickly disappears again.*) He came here with me tonight but he seems to have disappeared.

ETHEL. He came here with you? (*Drops her shawl on table right center.*)

MARMADUKE. Yes. His name is Jose Pietra, he's from a very old, very respected Spanish family.

HAZEL (*enjoying it—laughing*). Spaniards and Swedes? It must be Old Home Week. (*Crosses to settee.*)

ETHEL (*to MARMADUKE*). What do you think my home is—the arena for the International Olympics?

MARMADUKE. But, Auntie, in Spain he's famous. He's a well-known bull fighter.

HAZEL (*sitting*). Bull fighter?

ETHEL (*to HAZEL, facetiously*). I hope he didn't bring his bulls.

MARMADUKE (*quickly*). Well, he doesn't fight any more—he gave it up.

HAZEL (*to ETHEL, jokingly*). He ran out of bulls.

(*JACK comes downstairs, followed by OSCAR who has found his little book and is hastily scanning it. He quickly puts it in coat pocket as he comes into the room.*)

JACK. Oh—Auntie, there you are. (*Comes to center.*)

ETHEL (*sarcastically*). Yes, here I are. Who are you play-

ing tag with? My first night home, you arrange an exciting surprise party for me and then you run off and hide somewhere.

JACK (*with an apprehensive glance at the closet door*).
I—I—.

MARMADUKE (*dutifully*). But *I* wasn't hiding, Auntie.

ETHEL (*moving to right of table*). I wish you would go hide, Marmaduke. You're positively jittery tonight. (*Turns to OSCAR.*) Oscar, come over here. I want to hear all about you. (*JACK smiles, nods to OSCAR.*)

HAZEL (*jokingly, to ETHEL*). Now, Ethel, dear, I saw him first.

ETHEL (*as OSCAR goes to left of table, MARMADUKE goes up stage*). Oscar, where did you acquire such positively charming old world manners?

OSCAR (*speaking without thinking*). From my little book—. (*Checks himself quickly, as JACK clears his throat loudly.*) I mean—from my old ancient ancestors—my—er—what—you-may-call-em.

ETHEL (*laughing*). I don't know what you call them, but I'm decidedly interested. (*Goes to window.*) Do come out on the beach, dear boy, I want to know more about you. (*OSCAR goes to window, timidly.*) You know, it's so refreshing to meet a man who still feels that a woman is something more than a clothes horse—.

OSCAR (*as they stroll out window and off right*). Oh, I wouldn't say anything about your clothes—. (*They go.*)

HAZEL (*laughing*). Oscar is so quaint, isn't he? Why, some of the things he said to me were absolutely flattering.

JACK (*thoughtlessly, as he glances first at closet door, then off left arch*). Yes, but he thought you were Auntie.

MARMADUKE (*curiously*). Where did you dig up that guy, Jack.

JACK (*looking anxiously off arch to left*). Oh—I have many friends among the upper classes. (*To HAZEL, bows.*) Excuse me. (*Quickly exits arch to left.*)

HAZEL (*rising, crossing to window*). Well—I don't intend to sit here and miss that gorgeous January moon.

MARMADUKE (*politely*). Of course not. (*Goes to window, offers his arm.*) Allow me, Mrs. Barlow— (*She takes his arm,*

smiles, and they saunter off to right.) there's a wonderful view of the bay from here and the lights are dazzling when they're all lighted—. (*His voice trails off.*)

(JOSE, after slight pause, peers in from closet, then cautiously enters. He is still wearing his coat but he has found a skirt which he has drapped around his legs, completely covering them. He is breathing heavily and obviously under great mental anguish. He mutters and looks around wildly.)

JOSE. Bah! De blood of de Senor Don Jose Pietra grows cold wid such a embarrassment—. (*He is about centre, looking toward the arch, when MRS. OLEANDER and OTIS appear at window, she takes one look, a scream escapes her, she grabs OTIS and drags him off right. JOSE dashes for the closet, upon hearing her scream, he slams the door and disappears.*)

MRS. OLEANDER (*after second's pause, peering in from window, then tiptoeing in cautiously*). Otis—did you see it? Where did it go? (*OTIS starts to point to door right, but she goes on.*) Of all things. (*She looks around, under table, back of settee.*) Did you ever? I've always been suspicious of the people in this house, now I'm sure there's something wrong. Did you see the same thing I did? (*He starts to answer, but she stops him.*) Don't say you didn't—you know you did. As if we hadn't seen enough here tonight and now this! A man parading around the house with a—a—woman's— (*Struggles for words.*) OH! All I can say is I'm going to keep my eyes open. I don't want to miss a thing.

OTIS (*managing to eke out an exclamation*). HUH!

MRS. OLEANDER (*turning to him*). Oh—not what you think, you worm. (*Goes to window.*) Come along, I'm going to circle the grounds— (*He follows her.*) Keep on the alert, and, Otis, do please try to keep quiet and don't talk so much—. (*They exeunt window to the left.*)

(JOSE again opens closet door and looks into the room, entering after a careful scrutiny. He goes to center mumbling to himself and looking around anxiously.)

JOSE. Just wait! Just wait till Jose Pietra find de man what steal his trousers! Ha, just wait!

ETHEL (*off right, at a distance*). Oh, Oscar, let's go in—I'm a little chilly.

(JOSE *fairly dives for the closet and as he reaches the door drops the skirt and he quickly exits, leaving it on floor near door.*)

(ETHEL *enters window from right with OSCAR. She goes to right center, points to shawl on table.*)

ETHEL. There's my shawl—stupid of me to have left it here. (*Sits left of table, as OSCAR stands near closet door, and ON the skirt which he fails to notice.*)

OSCAR (*absent-mindedly*). Yes, it was.

ETHEL (*taken aback*). What?

OSCAR (*hastening to correct himself*). I mean—(*smiling at her bashfully*)—ah—a beautiful lady is never stupid.

ETHEL (*pleased*). Oh, Oscar—. You know, you remind me of Alexis in some ways. (JOSE *slowly opens closet door, unseen, reaches out with a hand, gets a grip on skirt and gives it a quick jerk, almost upsetting OSCAR. The closet door closes, OSCAR staggering to center.*)

OSCAR. OH—!

ETHEL (*looking at him in surprise*). Why—Oscar! What's the matter? What is it?

OSCAR (*eyeing the door right, fearfully*). It felt like an earthquake—(*checking himself.*) that is, I think I—I must have tripped on a four-leaf clover.

ETHEL (*laughing*). Oh, Oscar, your sense of humor is positively devastating. (*He manages a painful little laugh.*)

OSCAR (*trying to be sociable*). Oh, you haven't heard anything yet.

ETHEL (*rising, crossing to settee*). Oscar, are you quite sure you are all right? That is—ah—feeling well? (*Sits.*)

OSCAR. Well—(*Looks toward closet door.*) I was a little upset. (*As she looks front, he hastily glances at his little book, then quickly and business-like, kneels.*) Kneel on bended knee—. (*He takes her hand.*)

ETHEL (*amused*). What are you doing down there? Have you lost something?

OSCAR (*nervously*). No, I'm supposed to do this. (*Takes a deep breath.*) Fair lady, your charms remind me of—of—

the stately ladies of old. You have completely captivated me.

ETHEL (*pleased and a little embarrassed*). Oh, Oscar—
(*Laughs delightedly*.)

(OSCAR *takes her hand and kisses it quickly, drawing away, seemingly alarmed at his own boldness*.)

ETHEL (*drawing her hand away*). Oscar, you mustn't do that.

(MRS. OLEANDER and OTIS *appear, see them and quickly disappear—window*.)

OSCAR. But I must. It says so in the book—.

ETHEL. What?

OSCAR (*quickly*): I mean I promised to—.

ETHEL (*indignantly*). What?

OSCAR. I promised my mother I'd always be polite to ladies.

ETHEL (*relieved, sighs, as does OSCAR*). That's different. Your mother must be an old dear.

OSCAR (*without thinking*). Yes, you remind me of her.

WARNING: DOOR BELL

ETHEL (*rising, hurt*). Oh! Well, I must say I didn't think I looked that old. But it doesn't matter. I'm going to make some lemonade, Oscar. (*Goes to door down left*.) Come help me and tell me more about your mother. (*She exits left*.)

OSCAR (*following her, as he quickly brings out book and pages through it*). Well, all right, but I don't see anything about lemonade in here. (*Goes out left*.)

(JOSE *again peers out, again with the skirt about his legs. He goes to table right center, sees shawl, takes it up and throws it around his shoulders, speaking as he does so*.)

JOSE. By all de stars in old Espagna, I weel keel heem! Dat donkey Marmadukes—he is de last straw what breaks de elephant's back!

DOOR BELL

(JOSE, *with the shawl draped over his shoulders, again retreats to the closet, in haste*.)

(INEZ *immediately comes downstairs and quickly exits to answer bell*.)

(MRS. OLEANDER sticks her head in window, then cautiously enters, looking around for trouble. OTIS follows.)

MRS. OLEANDER. Otis—you saw? You heard? (*She comes to center and points to settee.*) Right there on the settee. Mrs. Van Della and that fluttering blonde viking! (*OTIS is staring at settee, mouth agape.*) Don't stand there with your chin at half-mast. Say something. Did you or did you not see what I saw? (*He starts to answer.*) Be quiet! (*Pats the floor with her foot, indignantly.*) Humph! Mrs. Van Della, too! Why—she's old enough to know better. (*He starts to speak.*) I know what you're going to say—that she isn't any older than I am. Well, thank goodness, there's nothing like that in my family. You are one man that can be trusted. (*Goes to window and exits in a huff.*) Thanks to my talent for reading the tea leaves—. (*She goes.*)

(OTIS goes to window, stops, looks off after her, mutters something unintelligible, makes a wry face and follows her.)

(INEZ enters from left in arch, followed by JUNE. Comes to up center.)

INEZ. Come in, June. I was afraid you'd be back.

(JUNE enters, crosses to right center. She has changed to evening gown.)

JUNE. Yes, I'm back. The party wouldn't be complete without me. As a matter of fact, I intend to be the life of the party. Where is my playmate, Marmaduke?

INEZ. He must be on the beach with the others.

JUNE. On the beach, eh? Before tonight is over he'll think he's going down for the third time. (*Hastens to explain.*) Oh, not that I care for him. Humph! (*Scornfully.*) Thinks I'm not good enough to associate with his aunt. Well, I'm going to teach him a lesson that he won't forget. (*Goes to window.*) Are you alone?

INEZ (*looking around*). Yes, quite alone.

JUNE. Then wait a minute. (*Exits window quickly.*)

(INEZ turns to left, as JOSE looks out door, sees her, ducks back, slams door. INEZ is startled.)

INEZ (*screaming*). Oh! (*Turns to right.*) What was that?

(JUNE re-enters, followed by GRACIE, JESSIE and DONNA. The three girls are of about the same age—twenty-two. All dress in evening gowns. They are pretty. JESSIE dark, GRACIE blonde, and DONNA titian. JUNE comes to center, GRACIE to right of her, JESSIE and DONNA over right.)

JUNE. Come on in, girls. I guess you all know Inez.

INEZ (*as the girls all greet her pleasantly*). Say—what's the idea of all this?

GRACIE (*who has an annoying habit of giggling in an increasingly high, shrill tone*). So you're in on this, too, Inez? (Giggles.)

INEZ (*uncertainly*). Maybe I'm in deeper than I thought. (To girls.) What are you here for?

JUNE (*looking around to be sure they are alone*). I'll do the talking before someone comes in.

GRACIE (*looking over the place*). Gee, this is a swell joint. What's the covert charge?

JUNE. Be quiet, Gracie. (To INEZ.) You know how prim and prissy Marmaduke tries to be when his aunt is around? He's so afraid she'll learn that he's associated in any way with a Casino girl. Well, he's not only going to be associated with ONE Casino girl, but with THREE. And here they are. (Gestures toward girls.)

GRACIE. And we're all going to stay for dinner. We're starved. (Giggles.)

DONNA (*sourly*). Yeah, and that's about all we'll get out of this—dinner.

JESSIE. After three months of hot dogs and chili, a hamburger steak and onions will look like a Ritz-Carlton Filet Mignon.

INEZ (*curiously, impatiently*). What do you intend to do?

JUNE (*speaking rapidly*). The girls are going to stay out there on the beach until Auntie and Marmaduke and the rest are all gathered here together, then I'll give them a signal from that window, they'll all rush in, throw their arms around Marmy—and you can imagine the rest.

GRACIE. And after that—we EAT. (Giggles.)

INEZ (*laughing hilariously*). This IS a scream—. (JUNE and GRACIE join her in laughter.)

JESSIE. There's just one thing to get straight. How will we know this Marmy?

DONNA. Yes. How? We've never seen the shrimp before.

JUNE. You can't miss him. He's small and insignificant looking. His head is like a motor car with the brains in neutral. I'll be right here, so don't worry. I've already told you what to say. (*Goes up to window.*)

INEZ (*amused*). But why didn't you bring ALL of the girls? (*Laughs.*)

GRACIE (*going to center*). They couldn't get away. (*Giggles.*)

JUNE (*looking off right and coming down center, hurriedly*). Here comes Marmaduke. Duck, quick.

INEZ (*as the girls all start in opposite direction—rushing up to arch*). Here—this way, girls. You can go out this way. (*Points off right in arch.*)

JUNE (*going to window*). Hurry! (*The girls hurry to arch, going out right, GRACIE last.*)

GRACIE (*giggling*). Ain't this a riot? And am I working up an appetite? (*They go, INEZ following, as MARMADUKE enters window from right, obviously worried.*)

MARMADUKE (*meeting JUNE, stops near window*). Oh, hello. I—I was looking for you. (*Shows his disappointment.*)

JUNE (*laughing*). Yeah, I know. Looking the other way.

MARMADUKE (*nervously*). Now, June, I'm worried. I wish you wouldn't aggravate me.

JUNE (*teasingly, as Mrs. OLEANDER and OTIS appear at window, unseen*). All right, Marmy, I won't. But there's one thing that worries me. That's Sally. I've got to have money for her upkeep.

MARMADUKE. Sh—! Not so loud. Someone might hear you.

JUNE. Well, Marmy, you've got to do something. I can't stand the expense alone. Not on my salary.

MARMADUKE. All right, all right, I'll take care of it later.

JUNE (*teasingly*). Oh, Marmy, my little pettikins—

(*Mrs. OLEANDER, at window, emits a little scream, grabs OTIS and they disappear quickly.*)

MARMADUKE (*going to window*). What was that?

JUNE (*following him up*). I don't know.

MARMADUKE (*looking off to right*). It's those nosey neighbors, the Oleanders. She's the most conscientious gossip in town. They've heard. Now, what'll I do?

JUNE. What of it? I can't see that there's anything so terribly wrong in giving your fiancée a motorboat.

MARMADUKE. No? If my aunt finds out that I gave you a five-thousand-dollar boat, she'll pass out—and take me with her. Oh, why did I have to be so generous? Why am I so kind-hearted?

JUNE (*jokingly*). Aw—don't fret, my little lambikins—.

MARMADUKE (*taking her hand and starting out window*). Don't baby talk me, I'm too jittery. Come on, there's something you don't know and I've got to tell you.

JUNE (*enjoying his discomfort*). And there's something you don't know and I hate to tell you.

(*He drags her off right.*)

(*JACK hurriedly comes downstairs and meets INEZ, who enters arch from right.*)

JACK. Oh, Inez—there you are. Where's Oscar? Where's Auntie? Where is everybody?

INEZ (*as they come into room*). Say—this is getting me dizzy. This party is going to be larger than we expected.

JACK. What do you mean?

INEZ. Larger and louder. June Day and three of her girl friends from the Casino just put in an appearance. They're planning a little surprise for Marmaduke.

JACK (*crossing right to window*). I don't care what happens to Marmaduke. I'm worried about Oscar—and that—(*pointing to closet*)—in there. Is he still there?

INEZ. If he isn't, he should be. I've still got his trousers.

JACK. Then he's still there. I wonder if he's conscious?

INEZ (*starting for door*). Shall I take a peep?

JACK. Certainly not. Let him rest in peace. (*Crosses to door down left.*) I've got to round up Oscar. You keep your eyes open, dear, and please try to make an impression with Auntie. (*Exits left.*)

INEZ (*doubtfully, as she exits arch to left*). Yes, try. Just try.

(MRS. OLEANDER and OTIS are again seen at the window. And they come into the room, MRS. OLEANDER to center and OTIS to up right center.)

MRS. OLEANDER (*scornfully*). Humph! This IS the last straw. Otis, I'm speechless, positively speechless. I'm at a loss for words. (*He starts to speak.*) I think Mrs. Van Della ought to be told a thing or two and that's exactly what I'M going to do.

OTIS (*opening his mouth*). I—.

MRS. OLEANDER (*cutting in*). Oh, I know what you're going to say, Otis Oleander, I know what's in your mind. You think it's none of my business. Well, I'm going to make it my business. I'm going to see this thing through to the bitter end. (*Starts for window.*) Come along. (*OTIS starts to go center and they collide heavily; MRS. OLEANDER, getting the worst of it, is knocked almost to center, and the force of it causes her to lose her switch, unnoticed. It falls just to left of table. Breathlessly, she turns to OTIS.*) OTIS Oleander, you idiot, can't you be more careful? Of all the insignificant worms, you get the bird. (*Indignantly pulling herself together, flounces out the window to right, OTIS dutifully following, meekly apologizing with futile gestures.*)

(JOSE slowly, cautiously opens closet door, enters, still wearing skirt and ETHEL's shawl. He goes to center, sees MRS. OLEANDER's switch, wildly reaches for it, muttering as he does so.)

JOSE. Caramba! Dees place is a lunitical asylum.

ETHEL (*off left, down right*). Jack, he's positively priceless. (*Laughs.*)

JOSE (*hurriedly going into closet, mumbling as he goes, and taking switch with him*). Don Jose Pietra is a gentleman, but too much is much too much—.

(ETHEL enters from left with JACK and OSCAR. She goes to center. JACK and OSCAR to front of settee.)

ETHEL. You never know just what he'll say next—nor why he'll say it. (*Laughs gaily.*)

JACK (*pleased*). I thought you'd like him.

ETHEL (*as OSCAR faces front, stupidly*). Why, I thought

I'd found a new interest in Alexis, but Oscar is so divinely entertaining I can hardly suppress a laugh every time I look at him.

OSCAR (*smiling*). Thanks. (*Then realizing the import of her words.*) Huh?

ETHEL. He's so naive. Not a bit like the fawning fortune-hunters on the Continent. (*To OSCAR.*) I should have been greatly disappointed had you proved to be a parasite.

OSCAR (*casually*). Oh, I've never been in Paris, so you could hardly call me a Parasite.

ETHEL (*laughing, as JACK tries to signal OSCAR to watch his step*). Oh, Oscar, that is good. A parasite is one who lives on another, repaying him with flattery.

OSCAR. Oh, I see. A man's wife. (*They all laugh.*)

(HAZEL enters window with MARMADUKE and JUNE. HAZEL goes to center, JUNE down right, MARMADUKE back of table.)

HAZEL. I'm sorry to intrude, but I've seen enough of the ocean for tonight. Is everybody happy?

ETHEL. Happy? We're delirious. (*To JUNE.*) Ah—I see you're back.

JUNE (*uncomfortably*). Oh, yes. I—I've been on the beach with Marmy.

ETHEL (*giving MARMADUKE a puzzled glance*). Oh, on the beach with Marmy, eh?

HAZEL. And I've been on the beach with the jellyfish. (*Laughs.*)

MARMADUKE (*changing the subject quickly*). You know, Auntie, I can't understand what's happened to Jose. I'm worried. I feel there's something terribly wrong.

JACK (*showing interest*). Jose? Who is Jose?

MARMADUKE. Senor Don Jose Pietra. A friend of mine who came here with me tonight.

JACK (*exchanging looks with OSCAR*). He—came—here—with—you?

MARMADUKE. Yes. A good-looking, dark, handsome chap. He's a famous bull fighter.

JACK (*as OSCAR's knees give way slightly*). A bull fighter?

MARMADUKE. A Spanish bull fighter.

(JACK and OSCAR lean against each other for support.)

JACK (*trying to talk, but only sputtering*). I—I—he—ugh.

MARMADUKE. And not only that—he has an enviable reputation as a swordsman.

(OSCAR *jumps as though he had been stabbed.*)

ETHEL. Oscar, what in the world is wrong with you?

(OSCAR *attempts to speak, but fails, then points to his mouth, tries to speak, shakes his head.*)

HAZEL. Oscar, have you lost your voice?

(OSCAR *nods vigorously.*)

JACK (*hastily*). Air! That's what he needs. AIR! (*Seizes OSCAR and drags him toward window, OSCAR slipping clumsily.*) He's had these attacks before. I've got to give him the air—.

(MRS. OLEANDER *barges in window with OTIS, and JACK collides with her, then pushing her aside, hurriedly exits to right, yelling for air as he goes.*)

MRS. OLEANDER. WELL! That's right—knock me down. Everything else has happened to me here. (*Goes to center, does not notice MARMADUKE and JUNE over extreme right, takes a deep breath and begins.*) Mrs. Van Della, I've been looking all over for you and—well, what I've seen while I've been looking! Humph!

ETHEL. Now that you've found me, what seems to be on your mind?

MRS. OLEANDER (*as OTIS eases to her side*). Well, far be it from me to talk. I've always made it a point to mind my own business. Otis will bear me out in that, won't you, Otis? (*Shakes his head vigorously, she turns to him, then he quickly nods assent.*) Yes. But there are some things—(*For the first time she sees MARMADUKE and JUNE, and she slowly cools off.*) I—I—er—well, (*Laughs uneasily.*)—it really is very, very embarrassing.

ETHEL. Then pray forget about it. Gossip is so fatiguing, don't you think so, Hazel? (*Winks at HAZEL.*)

MRS. OLEANDER (*indignantly*). That's just what I always say. But you know the old saying, "A word to the wise—" (*Giggles uneasily.*) Well, I really must be going, I suppose—. (*Eyes MARMADUKE suspiciously.*)

ETHEL (*with mock sincerity*). Oh, must you really go?

MRS. OLEANDER (*reluctant to miss anything*). Oh, of course, I could stay, if you insist. (*Lifts a hand to pat her hair in place, discovers the absence of her switch.*) OH! Oh, my switch!

HAZEL. Your what?

MRS. OLEANDER (*looking around the floor*). My switch—it's gone! (*Turns to OTIS, imploringly.*) Otis, my switch.

ETHEL (*facetiously*). Otis, have you got her switch? (*He shakes his head.*)

MRS. OLEANDER. Well, I've certainly lost it somewhere. Oh, this is SO embarrassing! I never go anywhere without my switch.

ETHEL (*quietly, to HAZEL, as OTIS and MRS. OLEANDER go up-stage searching the floor*). I'll be switched. (*They laugh quietly.*) I wouldn't let it go to my head, if I were you.

MRS. OLEANDER. But that's where I want it. Oh, dear.

HAZEL (*soothingly*). Don't worry, Mrs. Oleander, you look just as good without it.

MRS. OLEANDER (*hopefully*). Do you really think so?

HAZEL. Certainly. It would be very difficult to improve your looks?

ETHEL (*as MRS. OLEANDER smiles and turns to whisper to OTIS*). Difficult? Impossible.

MARMADUKE (*to ETHEL*). Auntie, I don't want to be impertinent—but didn't you say something about an Alexis in your correspondence?

ETHEL (*amused*). Did I? (*Looks at HAZEL, smiling*). Perhaps I did. He's very interesting. Oh, but you'll soon see for yourself. He's coming here tonight.

MARMADUKE (*alarmed*). Tonight?

ETHEL. Of course. That is—if his mother can spare him.

MARMADUKE. He's in town with his mother?

ETHEL (*as MARMADUKE stares wild-eyed*). Certainly. Marmaduke, you're goggle-eyed. What's so strange about that?

MARMADUKE (*nervously*). Oh—n-nothing. I—I—wanted you to meet Jose before you—I mean—but I can't find him.

ETHEL. Is he in the habit of mislaying himself like this?

MARMADUKE. I don't know. I think something has happened to him.

MRS. OLEANDER (*who has been attempting to interrupt at each word*). Mrs. Van Della, if I could have a word alone with you—(*giving MARMADUKE a look*)—perhaps I could throw some light on the situation.

ETHEL (*amused*). That sounds like a speech from a mystery play. You may speak freely.

MRS. OLEANDER (*casting a glance at MARMADUKE.*) I cannot speak freely in the presence of others. I must see you alone.

ETHEL (*going to door left*). Ah — the mystery deepens! Come right in here, Mrs. Oleander.

MRS. OLEANDER (*crossing left*). Come along, Otis. (*He follows her closely.*)

ETHEL. Oh, is Otis in on this, too?

MRS. OLEANDER. He most certainly is. Otis can substantiate everything I say.

ETHEL. How—by sign language? (*Exits left.*) Come along. (*They follow her.*)

MRS. OLEANDER (*going*). Hm—now, I'll get to the bottom of all this.

JUNE (*taking MARMADUKE's arm*). Come out on the beach, Marmy, I want to have a serious talk with you.

MARMADUKE (*reluctantly*). Well, I don't know—(*Casts an anxious glance at door left.*)

JUNE (*as she leads him out window to right*). Oh, don't you worry, pettikins, your sugar-pie will look after you— (*MARMADUKE groans, as they disappear.*)

(HAZEL, following them up, laughs as she looks off right, watching them go, then steps out of sight for a moment.)

(JOSE enters from closet with shawl, skirt and switch on, almost completely disguising him. He goes to center as HAZEL re-appears at window. She sees him and comes to center.)

HAZEL (*pleasantly*). Oh, hello there. (*She comes to up-center, JOSE turns in surprise, bows to her, assumes a slightly feminine gait and starts for window, when JACK and OSCAR enter.*)

JACK (*as they come on*). But I tell you, Oscar—. (*JOSE backs to right center, JACK and OSCAR eye him, suspiciously.*)

HAZEL (*puzzled, while they all stare from one to the other*).

I'd introduce you, Jack, but I don't know the young lady's name. Perhaps you—?

JACK (*eyeing JOSE, who is trying to hide his face with an end of the shawl*). I never saw her before. (*Turns to OSCAR, who is right.*) Oscar, did you ever see her before? (*JOSE constantly attempts to hide his face with an end of the shawl.*)

OSCAR (*facing front*). Not outside of a nightmare.

JOSE (*starting to speak in a high falsetto voice*). I—I—I'm afraid—(*His voice breaks, falling to a deep bass, then he suddenly sways weakly.*)

HAZEL (*to JACK*). Quick—I think she's going to pass out.

OSCAR. I think she ought to pass out.

JACK (*as JOSE sways, reaches out and supports him, JOSE leaning heavily*). There she goes. (*Catches him.*)

HAZEL (*to OSCAR*). Don't stand there gaping. Give him a hand. Do something.

OSCAR (*going to them at center*). What'll I do? (*Fans JOSE with a hand.*)

HAZEL. No, no, give him a hand.

OSCAR (*stupidly, shaking one of JOSE's hands*). Is she any better? (*This to JACK.*)

JACK (*bracing himself as he supports JOSE*). She isn't any lighter.

HAZEL (*pacing up and down nervously*). Carry her upstairs.

JACK (*gasping*). She's too heavy.

OSCAR (*helping JACK*). We'll have to jack her up.

HAZEL. No, no.

JACK. Oscar, take her feet. (*OSCAR reaches for his feet.*)

HAZEL. Why don't you try to start her circulation?

OSCAR. Where is her circulation?

HAZEL. Rub her hands. (*JACK, supporting JOSE from behind, reaches around, takes his hands and waves them up and down in a circular manner, one hand accidentally slaps OSCAR, who drops his feet suddenly.*)

OSCAR. Oh—she wants to play, eh?

HAZEL. Poor thing—she must have seen something. (*As they start to carry JOSE toward stairs.*) I'll tell Ethel. Perhaps she is a friend of hers. (*Starts toward door left.*)

JACK (*at arch*). NO. (*Hazel stops.*) No, don't tell Auntie.

HAZEL. Why not?

JACK. Because you mustn't tell her. I—er—(*Appears to have a sudden thought.*) Because she came here to see OSCAR.

OSCAR (*dropping JOSE's feet*). WHAT?

HAZEL (*incredulously*). To see Oscar?

JACK (*trying to nod to OSCAR*). Yes.

OSCAR (*groaning*). Nothing ever misses ME.

HAZEL (*horrified*). Oh, Oscar—you—you libertine!

OSCAR (*helplessly*). I tell you I don't know the lady.

HAZEL (*pacing up and down*). How dare you deny it? How can you be so cruel? You have broken that poor girl's heart.

OSCAR (*without thinking*). I didn't mean to—(*quickly*)—I mean I didn't.

HAZEL (*as JACK and OSCAR start carrying JOSE upstairs*). She's your sweetheart and you've deserted her. Is that it?

JACK (*going up*). Yes, yes, something like that.

HAZEL. Oh, Oscar!

OSCAR (*going up*). Oh, doctor!

HAZEL (*as JACK and OSCAR carry JOSE up and off-stage*). Never fear, Oscar, I shall keep your secret. Oh—(*She paces up and down.*)

OSCAR (*as he exits*). Oh—maybe I don't live right—. (*They leave.*)

HAZEL. Oh, that poor girl! And Oscar—of all people! This is too terrible!

(*ETHEL enters left with OTIS and MRS. OLEANDER.*)

ETHEL. Oh—this is too horrible!

HAZEL (*misunderstanding ETHEL and coming to her as she crosses to center*). Ethel—you know? You have heard already?

(*MRS. OLEANDER and OTIS stand at settee, satisfied that they have started the trouble.*)

ETHEL. Know? Heard? I've heard plenty. I can't believe it's true.

HAZEL. But how did you know?

ETHEL (*pointing to MRS. OLEANDER*). Pathe News—sees all. (*MRS. OLEANDER nods.*)

HAZEL. Then, if it's no secret, I might as well talk. *I've seen her.*

(*MRS. OLEANDER, all ears, nudges OTIS.*)

ETHEL. You have? What does she look like?

HAZEL. Not much. At first, I thought she was wearing a mask.

ETHEL. Do you mean to tell me she's here in the house now?

HAZEL (*breathlessly*). Yes, yes.

ETHEL (*goes up-stage, furiously*). Oh, the nerve of him! To bring her here tonight of all nights.

HAZEL. I don't think he brought her here—she just came.

ETHEL (*coming down center*). It doesn't matter. It's outrageous. I shall disinherit him.

HAZEL. Disinherit him?

ETHEL. Yes. If it's the last thing I do.

HAZEL. Disinherit Oscar?

ETHEL (*turning to her, in surprise*). Certainly NOT Oscar. Why Oscar?

HAZEL. Who are you talking about?

ETHEL. I'm talking about Marmaduke, of course.

HAZEL (*incredulously*). Marmaduke?

ETHEL. Of course.

HAZEL (*swaying weakly*). Marmaduke? Oh, this is too much.

ETHEL. Hazel, what's the matter with you?

HAZEL (*gasping weakly*). It isn't me. Oh, what a house—what a night!

MRS. OLEANDER (*whispering to OTIS*). What did *I* tell you? (*He opens his mouth.*) Keep quiet!

ETHEL (*going to HAZEL*). Hazel, do you know something I don't know? What is it?

HAZEL (*crossing up to window*). Oh, nothing, not a thing. I—I want air—lots of air.

(*JACK comes downstairs with OSCAR, both mopping their brows and puffing.*)

JACK. Auntie! (*Comes to her at center.*)

ETHEL (*turning to him*). Jack Lane, what do you know about all this?

JACK (*innocently*). I? I don't know a thing.

MRS. OLEANDER (*with her nose in the air*). Oh, I haven't told all yet, Mrs. Van Della. I saw that man (*pointing to OSCAR*) making love to the maid. (*OSCAR, up center, groans faintly.*)

ETHEL (*turning to OSCAR, incredulously*). Oscar!

OSCAR (*miserably*). I'm it again—.

MRS. OLEANDER. That's right. Didn't we, Otis? (*He whispers to her.*) Sh—! Quiet!

HAZEL (*unbelievably*). Oscar—the maid, too? You faithless Don Juan!

OSCAR (*starting for arch, to JACK*). Drop me a line sometime—.

JACK (*taking his arm, detaining him*). Where are you going?

OSCAR (*dryly*). To Alaska.

HAZEL (*wide-eyed*). He's probably got an Eskimo girl there.

OSCAR (*thoughtlessly*). Yeah, I've got an Es—(*Checks himself.*) I have not!

ETHEL. Hazel, will you please tell me what this is all about?

HAZEL. I'm afraid I don't know the half of it.

MRS. OLEANDER. I can tell you, Mrs. Van Della.

ETHEL (*holding up a hand*). No. No more from you, please.

MRS. OLEANDER (*petulantly, as OTIS tugs at her sleeve and whispers something in her ear*). Well, I was only going to—.

ETHEL (*turning to JACK*). Jack, ring for that maid at once.

JACK. But, Auntie—.

ETHEL (*cutting him off*). Do as I say. (*JACK goes to bell right of arch, rings.*) I'll find out about this.

MRS. OLEANDER (*who has been listening to OTIS, whispering*). Can't you wait till you get home? (*He shakes his head. She turns to ETHEL.*) Otis wants a glass of water. I think he's a little faint.

OSCAR (*eyeing OTIS, fiercely*). I think he's a little—.

MRS. OLEANDER (*indignantly*). Don't you dare! (OSCAR favors her with a withering look, turns up-stage.)

(JUNE enters with MARMADUKE from window. They are arm-in-arm.)

JUNE. But you know you promised me, Marmy, dear, and—. (*Stops on seeing the gathering.*)

ETHEL (*pointing an accusing finger at MARMADUKE*). Ah—ha!

(MARMADUKE shrinks back. JUNE is down extreme right. MARMADUKE just left of her.)

MARMADUKE. Oh—oh!

ETHEL (*accusingly*). So!

JUNE (*smiling engagingly*). Look, Marmy, what a lot of nice people. (*He nudges her, surreptitiously, she draws away.*) Oh, darling, now don't be so rough with your babikins.

MARMADUKE (*groaning faintly*). Oh—!

OSCAR. It missed me once.

ETHEL (*to MARMADUKE*). Well, Marmaduke Van Della, what have you to say for yourself?

MARMADUKE (*stalling for time*). N-n-nothing, except that I wish I could find Jose.

ETHEL. Jose? Jose? And what about Sally?

MARMADUKE (*his legs sagging weakly*). S-S-Sally?

ETHEL (*indignantly*). And you have the temerity to bring her here to my house.

JUNE (*enjoying MARMADUKE's discomfiture*). Oh, I'd think nothing of it, Mrs. Van Della, Marmy likes all the girls. (*Laughs.*) He's a lady killer.

MARMADUKE (*turning to her, imploringly*). June—!

ETHEL. I dare say. But, as far as he's concerned, they're out of season from now on.

(INEZ enters arch, to left center.)

INEZ. Did somebody ring? (*Then to ETHEL, sweetly.*) Did you ring, ma'am?

ETHEL (*still eyeing MARMADUKE*). Yes!

MRS. OLEANDER. Otis wants a glass of water.

INEZ (*going to door left*). Yes, ma'am.

HAZEL. You'd better bring a pitcher of water.

WARNING: 'PHONE BELL

OSCAR. Make it a bucket of water.

(INEZ starts off.)

ETHEL (*turning to her*). And when you come back I want a word with you. (INEZ gives JACK a look of apprehension and goes out left.) Now, Marmy, we'll listen to your feeble attempts to explain.

MARMADUKE (*wiping his brow*). Just what do you want me to say?

ETHEL (*turning to HAZEL*). Hazel, do you hear that?

HAZEL (*hopelessly*). Yes, I hear, I hear.

MRS. OLEANDER. Thank goodness, there's no such nonsense in my family.

ETHEL (*giving her a withering look*). Old faithful—always ready to put in a good word. (*'Phone bell rings.*) I'll answer that. (*Crosses to table, takes up 'phone.*)

MRS. OLEANDER (*sotto voce, to OTIS*). Now we're going to hear something.

ETHEL (*speaking in 'phone*). Hello. (*Listens, then speaks sweetly, softly.*) Oh, it's you, Alexis, dear boy. Yes, to be sure. (*Listens.*) Right away? The chauffeur is driving? (*Listens.*) All right, dear. Of course. (*Hangs up, turns to others.*) That was Alexis. He's coming here.

OSCAR (*shaking hands quickly with JACK*). Good-bye. You don't need me now.

JACK (*detaining him*). Wait. Auntie, do you mean to say this—this Alexis is really on his way here now?

MRS. OLEANDER (*nudges OTIS*). Listen—you hear? (*Nods vigorously.*)

ETHEL (*going to center*). Alexis will be here at any moment—I want you all to meet my—

(*Upstairs there is a sound of a loud crash, a terrific pounding on doors, and a muffled voice yelling.*)

JOSE (*off-stage*). Let me out—let me out—! (*His voice is shrill.*)

ALL (*ad libbing*). What's that? Who is it? What has happened?

MRS. OLEANDER (*elated at the prospects of more trouble*). Ah—ha! Now, we'll see.

HAZEL (*as they all stop talking at once*). Oh—it's that woman!

ETHEL. What woman? Who is she?

HAZEL (*turning up-stage*). Oh, I can't tell you, I can't tell you.

ETHEL (*to MARMADUKE, who is shivering over right*). Marmaduke Van Della, who is that woman?

MARMADUKE (*wildly*). I don't know—she doesn't belong to me.

JOSE (*off-stage, pounding on a door*). Help—help—let me out of here!

ETHEL. Woman, eh? She must be a bass singer.

(JUNE quickly goes to window, looks off right, waves her handkerchief as a signal to the girls).

MRS. OLEANDER (*to OTIS*). Now, something is going to happen. Oh, I can't wait.

(OTIS, carried away with anticipation, claps his hands and jiggles up and down, childishly.)

ETHEL (*to MARMADUKE*). You—you—and your Sally.

MARMADUKE (*helplessly*). But, Auntie, there is no Sally—.

OSCAR (*casually, singing*). I wonder what's become of Sally—.

ETHEL (*turning to him, fiercely*). Quiet!

MARMADUKE. June can explain all about Sally, can't you, June? (*She is at window, looking off—turns to him and smiles.*)

JUNE. No!

(MARMADUKE sinks weakly against the table.)

ETHEL. Marmaduke Van Della, if your sweetheart is here in this house, why don't you say so?

(MARMADUKE weakly tries to speak, but fails.)

HAZEL (*coming down to right center*). But, Ethel, it isn't Marmaduke. It's Oscar's sweetheart.

OSCAR (*eyes to the ceiling, hopelessly*). Good-bye again—.

MRS. OLEANDER (*snorting*). Humph! He's probably got them all over the place. Thank goodness, there's nothing like that in my family. (*Crosses in front of OTIS to left.*)

(At window, JUNE is beckoning the girls. They enter, take one look toward left, spy OTIS, believing him to be Marmaduke, dash as one down to him at right of settee, throw their arms around him, calling him sweet names.)

Left
GRACIE. (giggling). Darling!

JESSIE. Sweetheart!

DONNA. Baby!

MRS. OLEANDER *(taking one look, faints on sofa, with a scream)*. Oh!

(INEZ enters left with pitcher of water.)

INEZ. Here's the water!

(OSCAR goes back to settee and meets her at door, takes pitcher, as JUNE rushes to girls, trying to pull them away from OTIS.)

OSCAR. Give me that water! *(Takes a deep drink from pitcher, then daintily sprinkles water on the unconscious MRS. OLEANDER. HAZEL faints in JACK's arms, MARMADUKE is leaning weakly against the table. ETHEL is pacing up and down center, tearing her hair, JUNE is vainly trying to stop the girls, as they literally smother OTIS, who is trying to free his arms and yelling for help. This is all accompanied by shouts, yells for help, and much noise from JOSE off-stage. The confusion reaches a high mark as the curtain falls quickly.)*

CURTAIN

June in January

ACT THREE

SETTING: *Same as ACTS ONE and TWO.*

TIME: *A few moments later.*

AT RISE: OTIS cautiously peeps in from door left and, finding the room deserted, he enters and tiptoes up to window right. As he turns to face front, signs of his recent experience are plainly visible on his face, in the form of large splotches of prominent, red rouge. His face somewhat resembles that of the victim of smallpox. Fearfully, he looks out window, and immediately draws back in alarm. He emits a startled, faint scream, hurries to the closet door right, and, finding it unlocked, quickly disappears inside.

(MRS. OLEANDER enters window, eyes blazing, lips set determinedly. She is carrying a dangerous-looking piece of bric-a-brac, such as a vase or statuette. She goes to arch, looking around, looks off, then down to door left, exits belligerently.)

(MARMADUKE enters from right in arch. He hurries down to door left, looks off, then hurries up to arch right and looks out. Startled, he backs down to closet door just as OTIS opens the door, bumping him roughly. MARMADUKE screams and dashes wildly upstairs, stumbling and falling. OTIS slams door and again disappears in closet.)

(JUNE enters window, followed by GRACIE, JESSIE and DONNA, all talking at once.)

JUNE: You thought—you thought—! You've ruined everything—!

(DONNA goes to right, JUNE to center, JESSIE and GRACIE to right center.)

DONNA. Well, what did you expect without a rehearsal?

JUNE (*furiously*). Of all the dumb tricks I ever heard of—this beats them all. I can imagine one of you empty-heads making a mistake, but how could three people be so dumb?

JESSIE. But we thought he was the right shrimp—.

Window
JUNE (*turning up center*). You thought wrong.

GRACIE (*giggling*). I thought we were going to eat.

DONNA (*to JUNE*). I don't see where you have any kick coming. We did our best. Why didn't you point him out?

JESSIE. Yes, why didn't you do that?

JUNE (*relenting, comes down-stage*). Oh, I'm sorry, girls. I suppose I was too hasty—too anxious. Perhaps it's just as well it happened that way. I guess poor Marmy has suffered enough as it is. Besides, I like him.

DONNA (*with a touch of sarcasm*). Hm—a case of love at first sight, I suppose.

JUNE. No, I didn't know till the second time I met him that he would someday be worth a quarter of a million.

GRACIE (*starting to giggle, but almost choking when JUNE's words sink in*). I—ugh—. A quarter—of—a—mil—. (*Gasps, drapes herself weakly on JESSIE for support.*) Oh—I can't say it—I can't even think it.

JUNE (*smiling*). Oh, Marmy isn't a bad little shrimp.

JESSIE. Shrimp? You mean caviar.

JUNE. Well, anyway, it's a cinch you can't be seen here now. Marmy's aunt is on the war-path. You've got to keep out of sight until I square things.

DONNA. I knew we wouldn't get to eat.

JUNE. Don't worry. After I have a little talk with Marmaduke, we'll all be eating at the Roney-Plaza.

GRACIE (*delightedly*). Oh, won't that be nice? I hear they serve the best hamburgers in town there.

JESSIE (*pushing her away, hopelessly*). Hamburgers at the Roney-Plaza? Help!

GRACIE. Well, maybe it's hot dogs.

JUNE (*confidentially*). Now, listen, girls—.

(*JACK is heard talking to OSCAR upstairs.*)

JUNE. Here comes somebody. Duck, quick! (*They all scatter in opposite directions, ad libbing.*)

GRACIE. Scatter where? (*Goes to left.*)

JUNE. No, no, not that way!

JESSIE (*going to window*). Follow me.

DONNA (*following her*). Come on, Lame-brain.

JESSIE (*as they all reach window, looking off*). There's

somebody out there with a club—it's that fellow's wife.

JUNE (*looking off*). What fellow?

JESSIE. You know—

JUNE (*drawing back*). Oh, Mrs. Oleander! She mustn't see you.

GRACIE (*going to closet door right*). Not while I'm conscious. (*Opens closet door.*) Come on—this way out.

JUNE (*at window*). Yes, yes, hurry.

(JESSIE goes quickly into closet, DONNA following.)

DONNA. It's dark in there.

JUNE. Then you'll be safe. No one will see you.

DONNA (*as she goes*). I wouldn't bet a nickel on it.

GRACIE (*holding closet door open and giggling*). Wouldn't it be exciting if we had to stay here all night? (*Exits.*)

JUNE. Exciting?

JACK (*coming downstairs with OSCAR, in heated debate*). Ring for Inez, Oscar. (*He goes to center.*) We've got to find those trousers and return them to that Spanish onion some way. (*Sees JUNE as she steps down from up near window.*) Oh, hello.

JUNE (*smiling, while OSCAR goes to right of arch and rings*). Oh, excuse me. I—I was just going—.

JACK (*thoughtlessly*). That's good—(*checking himself*)—I mean—that's not so good.

JUNE. I was looking for Marmaduke. Have you seen him?

JACK. Not since pandemonium broke loose.

JUNE (*crossing to door left*). Oh, I'm going—I'm afraid of wild animals. (*Exits left.*)

JACK (*puzzled*). She's afraid of—? What's she talking about? Wild animals?

OSCAR. She must mean Mrs. Oleander.

JACK (*looking off left*). That girl is UP to something.

OSCAR (*center*). So am I. UP to my neck in trouble.

(INEZ enters arch from left.)

INEZ. Did you ring, sir? (*Changes her tone.*) What's the matter now?

(JACK goes to left center, INEZ center, OSCAR right center.)

JACK. Those trousers. What did you do with them?

INEZ. I have them.

JACK (*speaking rapidly*). Give them to me.

INEZ. I don't have them with me.

JACK (*impatiently*). Where are they? Get them quickly.

INEZ (*looking from one to the other*). Say—what's the big idea?

JACK. I haven't time to go into details, but we were wrong about that fellow. He isn't Auntie's Alexis.

INEZ. He isn't?

JACK. No. He's somebody else.

INEZ. Naturally. But WHObody else?

JACK. He's a friend of Marmaduke. A Spanish something-or-other. He fights bulls and carries a dagger. (*Pantomimes stabbing her.*)

INEZ (*startled*). Oh! But what was he doing in that—that get-up?

OSCAR (*to JACK*). She can ask more questions.

JACK. We don't know. Probably looking for an exit. But we do know that he's dangerous.

OSCAR. Yes, and all we did was beat him up and snitch his trousers.

JACK. We'll explain that to him.

OSCAR. We? What do you mean—we? You'll explain, and I'd advise you to do it by letter—from China.

JACK (*speaking rapidly*). Inez, get his trousers, and if you see Marmaduke, you explain to him.

INEZ (*going to arch*). Oh, passing the buck to me, eh?

JACK (*going up to her at arch*). Please, Inez, don't quibble. I'm worried. That fellow Alexis is probably on his way here now.

INEZ (*starting upstairs*). Well, I'll do my best—(*Turns to them quickly, whispers.*) Quick, run!

JACK. What's the matter?

INEZ (*motioning them to leave*). It's him. The bull fighter—and Marmaduke. Here they come!

OSCAR (*going right*). Here I go.

INEZ. Quick, Jack, run!

JACK (*running up and down wildly*). Which way?

INEZ. Any way, straight up.

(OSCAR dashes in closet door, then with a wild scream

comes out again and makes for the window.)

JACK (*to OSCAR, following him up*). What's the matter?

OSCAR (*pointing to closet door*). Standing room only! (*Dashes out window to right, JACK behind him.*)

(MARMADUKE comes downstairs with JOSE, who is now dressed as he was when he first entered on ACT ONE, except his trousers. He is wearing a pair that are far too large. They hang loosely, and he seems to have a difficult time trying to keep them from falling. He constantly pulls them up, supporting them with one hand.)

JOSE (*coming to center*). Caramba! Dees trousers—dey fit too soon—and too much.

MARMADUKE (*going to his left*). I know, Jose, but I did my best. I borrowed those from the gardener.

JOSE (*pulling up trousers*). De gardener must belong to de circus side-show. (*Starts right, trips on hanging pant-leg.*) Dees is most embarrassing.

INEZ (*crossing up to stairs, hiding a smile*). Ahem—excuse me, sir.

MARMADUKE (*noticing her for the first time*). Oh—. (*She goes upstairs.*) Not bad, Jose. (*Looking up after INEZ.*) Not bad.

JOSE (*referring to his trousers*). Not bad? Are you making de spoof wed me? Dey could not be so much worser.

MARMADUKE (*going to JOSE, right center*). I have it, Jose. We'll explain that those are your matador's trousers. Part of your costume, you know, when you fight the bull.

JOSE (*elated*). Caramba! Dat is an idea dat is good—. (*Sees red table cover on table.*) Look! De matador's sash—no? (*Wraps cover around his waist.*) Ha, now Don Jose Pietra is once more heemself.

MARMADUKE. Say—that's all right, Jose. You look like something now.

JOSE (*doubtfully*). I look like something—but what? (*Recklessly.*) Ha, but what do Jose care? I am ready to meet de Senorita Auntie. Bring her on. I weel look her in de eye like de bull—and she weel wilt. (*Then, fiercely.*) But listen, my fran—(*OSCAR peeps in window, listens as JOSE draws a finger across his throat in a threatening manner.*)

when I catch de bandits what soak me on de cocoanuts and steal my breeches, de blodd of de robbers weel run like water! (OSCAR's jaw drops and he quickly vanishes.) Ha! De revenge weel be sweet like de sugar, no?

MARMADUKE (*anxiously*). Now, Jose, don't start any rough stuff until after you've met Auntie, and please try not to be so vicious. (*Crosses left.*)

JOSE (*following him, holding his pants as they slip*). You are tolling me? Now Jose Pietra weel make up for de lost hay what should be made in de sunshine. (*They go out left, JOSE clumsily tripping on trousers.*)

(MRS. OLEANDER appears at window from left. She comes center, eyes searching the room. She still carries the threatening bric-a-brac.)

(INEZ comes downstairs with JOSE's trousers, stops suddenly on sight of MRS. OLEANDER, quickly hides trousers under her apron.)

INEZ. Oh—excuse me.

MRS. OLEANDER (*with rising inflection*). Where is my husband—where is my husband?

INEZ (*in same tone*). I don't know—I don't know.

MRS. OLEANDER (*eyeing her suspiciously*). What are you hiding there?

INEZ (*nervously*). Not your husband. (*Laughs uneasily.*)

(JESSIE opens closet door and steps into room. She gives a nervous laugh and goes toward window, casually.)

JESSIE. Ah—lovely weather we're having, isn't it? (*Exits window quickly.*)

MRS. OLEANDER (*pulling herself up, sniffing*). Lovely weather, indeed?

(DONNA opens closet door, repeats business exactly as that of JESSIE. Saunters to window.)

DONNA. Ah—lovely weather we're having, isn't it? (*Goes out quickly.*)

MRS. OLEANDER (*turning to INEZ*). Tell me, girl, what's in that room?

INEZ (*nervously*). Must be the weather bureau.

closet window
(GRACIE enters from closet, goes to window, casually.)

GRACIE. Ah—lovely weather—(Starts out quickly and Mrs. OLEANDER takes a threatening step toward her.)

Mrs. OLEANDER (turning to INEZ). I'm going to find out what is in there. (Crosses to door, gets directly in front of it as OTIS suddenly throws the door open, hitting Mrs. OLEANDER and knocking her up-stage. She screams, OTIS dashes madly out window. Mrs. OLEANDER, recovering herself, pursues him, yelling.) Stop! Halt, come back here, you under-cover kid!

(INEZ laughs hilariously, as JACK enters window with OSCAR, from left. They look off right at the fleeing couple.)

INEZ. You're a little late—for the big parade. (Laughs.)

JACK (going to her at center, eagerly). Where are they? Did you get them?

INEZ (producing the trousers). Yes, and you can have them. Here!

JACK (taking trousers). Thanks. (Looks around.) Where did he go?

INEZ (pointing to door left). I think he went that way.

OSCAR (starting for window). Then I'll go this way.

JACK (holding him). No, you won't. (To OSCAR.) You find Auntie and don't let her out of your sight. Something big is going to happen here soon.

OSCAR (mournfully). Yeah, and I'll be right in the middle of it.

(ETHEL comes downstairs with HAZEL. Both appear somewhat subdued in manner.)

ETHEL. Ah—the happy threesome! (OSCAR goes over extreme right near mantel, JACK to right center, ETHEL center, HAZEL up right center, INEZ near arch.) Hasn't Alexis arrived yet?

JACK (quickly hiding trousers under his coat). No, I don't think so, Auntie. But here's Oscar.

(OSCAR smiles weakly.)

ETHEL (giving him a cold look). I see him—I see him. (OSCAR's smile fades.)

OSCAR (*as ETHEL turns to INEZ—sotto voce*). Well, I won't need this now. (*Throws his notebook in fireplace.*)

ETHEL (*to INEZ*). Stand by the door, my girl.

INEZ. Yes, ma'am. (*Goes out right, arch.*)

(MARMADUKE *enters left with JOSE. JOSE still having trouble keeping up his trousers.*)

MARMADUKE. Oh, Auntie—I found Jose, you know. Here he is. (OSCAR *edges toward window, JACK stops him.*)

ETHEL (*to HAZEL*). At last—the missing link. (*To MARMADUKE.*) You're somewhat of a magician, my boy. You make them appear and disappear.

MARMADUKE. Oh, Auntie, I can explain about that business upstairs. It was—(*Starts to indicate JOSE; she cuts him off.*)

ETHEL. Never mind. Don't spoil the illusion.

JOSE (*nudges MARMADUKE, impatiently*). Ahem—.

MARMADUKE. Oh, this is my friend, Senor Don Jose Pietra—I guess you've heard me speak about him.

ETHEL (*casually*). Constantly. What's the name, Senor?

(JOSE *steps to center, left of her. His trousers slip, but he supports them with a free hand.*)

JOSE. Ah—Senorita! Senor Don Jose Pietra, and dees ees a pleasure I have long look forward to. You are like an exquisite flower of my native land—.

OSCAR (*thoughtlessly*). No, no, your charms remind me of the stately—. (JACK *nudges him, shakes his head warningly; OSCAR, realizing his error, stops and smiles apologetically.*)

JOSE (*glaring at him, then to ETHEL*). My good friend, Marmaduke, he has speak too much of your charms, but now dat I see you in de flesh—ah! mere words dey cannot do justice to your beauty! (*Kisses her hand, his trousers slip, he retrieves them quickly.*)

ETHEL (*delighted*). Oh, dear me, how nice!

JOSE (*dramatically*). I am speechless in de splendor of your presence. You are what you say—divine—heavenly, no?

(OSCAR, *fascinated at his technique, reaches for his book in fireplace, and stands ready to take a few notes from JOSE.*)

HAZEL (*laughing as ETHEL giggles with delight at JOSE's flattery.*) No—.

MARMADUKE (*indicating HAZEL, and, in turn, JACK*). Mrs. Barlow—Mr. Jose Pietra. (*JOSE crosses up to her, bows, kisses her hand. She is pleased, smiles.*) And my cousin, Jack Lane.

JOSE (*turns to him with a sinister smile*). Charmed, I'm sure.

JACK. Me, too! (*Nervously, he offers his hand and the trousers drop from under his coat to floor behind him. He slyly kicks them back to OSCAR, who quickly picks them up and hides them under his coat, all unnoticed by others, who are intent on JOSE. JACK holds JOSE's hand tightly until after the business is executed, shaking it vigorously.*)

JACK (*turning to OSCAR*). This is my friend, Oscar Larsen, Mr.—ah—Pedro.

JOSE (*to JACK*). PIETRA, PIETRA! (*He crosses, shakes hands with OSCAR, the trousers dropping to floor; OSCAR holds JOSE's hand, as JACK circles back of table and, as JOSE turns and crosses to center, picks up trousers, hides them under his coat.*) Charmed—. (*This to OSCAR.*)

OSCAR (*as he shakes*). Ha, that's good! (*Laughs nervously.*)

JOSE (*to ETHEL*). Ah—Senorita, for one rare moment of your gracious company I would give many, many days of my life. (*Dramatically, waving his arms in worldly gestures.*) I am a man of de world. Many times have I court de Spanish senoritas. Many, many times she has give her hearts beats to Jose, but NEVER before have I been so completely bowled over. (*Bows to her.*)

OSCAR (*sotto voce, to JACK*). I wish he was bowled over—.

HAZEL (*laughs, as ETHEL giggles and squirms childishly*). Oh—I'm dying.

ETHEL (*indignantly*). Oh, is that so? I don't see anything to laugh about. I think there is something in what Jose says. After all, I'm not exactly a gargoyle in human form. And as for age — well, I can still look up a number in the 'phone book.

HAZEL (*comes down a little*). Are you implying that I can't?

ETHEL (*patronizingly*). Well, no, Hazel, but you know you're older than I am.

HAZEL (*angrily*). Why, Ethel, how can you say that? You must be at least—

ETHEL (*quickly stopping her*). Never mind, never mind. I know how old I am, but you—

JOSE (*who has been trying to get a word in*). Please, please, beautiful ladies—. (*They both relent and smile sweetly at him.*)

OSCAR (*admiringly*). Oh, boy, what technique!

JOSE. No woman is old in de eyes of de Spanish *gentlemens*. (*Gives JACK and OSCAR a sinister look, then turns to ETHEL.*) But before we continue dees so delightful discussion, dere ees something dat Jose Pietra must have finish with. (*Bows to ETHEL.*)

OSCAR (*to JACK*). He's gonna finish us.

JOSE (*turning, crossing to JACK, right center*). Perhaps I ask you dees question, Senor. Have I not seen dees face— (*Pats JACK's cheek affectionately.*)—before tonight?

JACK (*uneasily*). No, but you might have seen it tonight before. (*Laughs weakly.*)

JOSE (*laughing bitterly*). Very amusing, very amusing. (*Stops laughing.*) I am sure I have seen dees same face—without de sickly smile, no? (*JACK's smirk disappears.*) Perhaps you could tell me where I could find my breeches, no? Den you will kindly allow me to keel you, no?

ETHEL and HAZEL (*together*). OH!

(*JOSE turns, bows to the ladies, as JACK frantically holds trousers behind his back and waves them at OSCAR, but OSCAR backs away, wanting no part of them.*)

JOSE (*to ladies*). You weel pardon? (*Crosses toward JACK, passes him to OSCAR.*) You, Senor, (*OSCAR cowers.*)—you will permit me to say I have seen your face before. How could I forget it—I ask you?

OSCAR (*swallowing painfully*). Er—ah—let's play some other game. I never did care for that guessing game. (*Laughs uneasily.*)

(*JACK left of JOSE, facing JOSE with his back to center.*)

ETHEL (*pointing to JACK, as one leg of the trousers hang down below his coat*). Jack, you're losing something.

JACK. Huh? (*Turns, realizes what is wrong, quickly pulls trousers up under his coat, just as JOSE turns to him, but JOSE does not notice this business.*)

JOSE. I, too, have lose something. (*Crosses JACK to center.*) You will pardon me, *Senoritas*, but as a true Spanish *cabellero* I must settle my honor weed dees gentlemen. (*Turns to JACK.*) I demand satisfaction, *Senor*.

JACK (*between JOSE and OSCAR, speaking to OSCAR*). You hear that, Oscar? Are you going to stand there and take that?

OSCAR (*stupidly*). I didn't take anything.

JOSE (*to JACK*). Bah! I demand satisfaction. I want my retribution!

JACK (*passing it along to OSCAR*). You hear that? He wants satisfaction and retribution.

OSCAR. Well, why don't you give them to him?

ETHEL. See here, what's all this about?

HAZEL (*to ETHEL*). Why, Ethel, I believe you arranged all this to entertain ME. (*Laughs.*)

JOSE (*to JACK*). You, *Senor*, shall chose de weapons.

JACK (*again turning to OSCAR*). You hear, Oscar, you shall choose the weapons?

OSCAR (*wild-eyed*). Is he talking to me?

JOSE (*to JACK*). Pistols or swords, *Senor*? But I warn you—I am de most proficient swordsman in all Spain.

JACK (*to JOSE*). Then he'll choose pistols.

JOSE. And as for pistols—I split de card at forty paces.

OSCAR (*casually*). How's your golf game?

JOSE. We meet tomorrow at sunrise.

OSCAR. I don't get up that early. (*Laughs uproariously, but the others do not join him. He goes on to explain.*) You know, I read that somewhere once and I thought it was the funniest joke I ever—. (*His voice trails off as he fails to impress them.*)

JACK (*to JOSE*). Very well, *Senor Pietra*, since you feel you must have satisfaction, my friend shall oblige you. BUT—

it must be in the fashion of HIS country and under Marquis of Queensbury rules.

JOSE. Marquis of rassberry, who is SHE?

JACK. It's the manly art of self-defense. (*Squares off in fighting pose, as OSCAR attempts to dissuade him.*) Come, OSCAR. (*Goes to window.*)

OSCAR (*imploringly*). But couldn't we talk it over—or write each other notes, or something?

JOSE. NO! Dere has already been too much talk. Come, Marmaduke—(*He goes to window.*) You will soon see dat de blood of de Spanish Dons flows in de veins of Senor Jose Pietra. Come.

ETHEL (*enjoying it, but a little alarmed*). Don't you think you're carrying this a little too far?

MARMADUKE (*going up left of window*). I'LL take care of this, Auntie.

ETHEL. Then I know someone will be killed. (*Turns to HAZEL; they whisper.*)

JOSE (*to MARMADUKE*). You, Marmaduke, shall be my second.

OSCAR (*looking at him fearfully*). Second? I don't think you'll need one.

JOSE (*as he makes a heroic, grand, strutting exit*). I have been grossly insult. I have been soaked on de cocoanuts, I have been robbed of my—ahem—dignity—. NOW I shall get de grand satisfaction. (*Goes out right, followed by MARMADUKE.*)

ETHEL (*nervously*). I hope he gets something.

JACK (*to OSCAR, who tarries*). Come, Oscar, show him the spirit of your proud ancestors. Why should anybody be afraid?

OSCAR (*going to window, reluctantly*). Oh, no reason why anybody should be afraid. Anybody don't have to fight that Spanish tornado. (*JACK exits right.*) Skilled swordsman—(*half to himself.*)—expert pistol shot—I wonder what he can do a hundred-yard dash in? (*Goes out right, sadly shaking his head.*)

ETHEL (*pacing up and down, nervously*). What a homecoming! I think they've all gone mad. I shouldn't have invited Alexis here. What will his mother say?

HAZEL. What would anybody say?

(JUNE enters arch with JESSIE, GRACIE, and DONNA. JUNE comes to right of HAZEL, and left of ETHEL. JESSIE, GRACIE and DONNA remain over left.)

JUNE. Oh, Mrs. Van Della, I wonder if I could have a word with you—alone? There's something that needs explaining and I think I could do a good job of it.

ETHEL. Don't tell me there's more that I don't know about?

JUNE. Well, not much more.

GRACIE (giggling). No, not much.

ETHEL (shaking her head hopelessly). Well, it doesn't matter. After what I've seen tonight, I can stand anything. I'm numb. (Crosses to door left.) Come in here where we hope we won't be interrupted. Come, Hazel, I'll need your support.

JUNE (crossing to door left and exits). Come, girls. (They follow her off left. GRACIE remains standing left center.) It's so generous of you, Mrs. Van Della. (She goes.)

ETHEL. Generous? Meet Mrs. Santa Claus. (They all go, GRACIE following.)

GRACIE (as she leaves). I wonder when we eat—.

(From the window comes the sound of voices, preceding the entrance of JOSE and OSCAR, arm-in-arm, and JACK and MARMADUKE. OSCAR and JOSE are somewhat the worse for their encounter, hair disheveled, ties awry, collars soiled, etc. OSCAR seems to have had the worst of it. But now they are all friendly.)

JOSE. Speak no more about it, my fran. (Speaks until on center.)

JACK (going right center). After all—everybody makes mistakes. (Laughs.) And there really wasn't any harm done.

OSCAR (crossing to right). No, not to you. (Caresses his injured jaw.)

JOSE (to OSCAR). Never before have I seen such quickness on de feets. De feetwork was magnificent.

JACK (shaking hands with JOSE). Then there's no hard feelings?

JOSE. Not at all, my fran. De pleasure was all mine.

OSCAR. I don't doubt that—it wasn't mine!

JACK. That's good. No hard feelings.

OSCAR No, only soft feelings. (*Rubs his eye.*)

JOSE. De gentlemens never have de misunderstanding.

JACK. That's the way to talk. (*Both laugh, MARMADUKE joining in from his position up near arch.*) It's always better to thrash things out, talk things over, don't you think?

OSCAR. We did both. He — (*indicating JOSE*) — did the thrashing and I did the talking. (*They all laugh.*)

MARMADUKE (*coming down to left of JOSE.*) And now, Jose, I want you to become better acquainted with my Aunt.

JACK (*laughing*). Say, Marmaduke, wasn't it funny that you and I should have the same idea about Auntie? Now we'll stick together and we'll upset this foreign fortune-hunter's plans for fair.

JOSE (*proudly*). Jose—he will do de upsetting.

JACK (*to OSCAR, as he goes up to arch*). Come along, Oscar, you've got to fix up. I'll touch you up so that your own mother might recognize you. (*As he goes toward arch, one pant-leg hangs down below his coat, OSCAR frantically rushes up and tucks it under coat out of sight. JOSE has turned to speak to MARMADUKE and does not notice this.*)

OSCAR (*as he rushes up*). Look out! (*JOSE and MARMADUKE turn.*)

JOSE. EH?

OSCAR (*quickly, as JACK turns*). Look out the window and see how the beautiful stars shine on the beautiful water. It—er—really—is—er—beautiful. (*Laughs weakly.*)

JACK (*impatiently*). Come along Oscar—(*OSCAR groans miserably.*) Oh, you don't look half as bad as you feel. (*He goes upstairs.*)

OSCAR. Don't I? (*Faces front.*) How can I be so deceitful? (*He goes up.*)

MARMADUKE. Now, Jose, that that's settled, I'll find Auntie and send her in to you. You wait right here—and please try to keep out of trouble.

JOSE (*as MARMADUKE goes to door left*). Trouble? Senor, I am a Spanish gentlemens.

MARMADUKE. Yes, I know. That's why I'm worried about you. (*Goes out left.*)

(JOSE straightens his tie, looks himself over, gives his trousers a hitch.)

(OTIS appears at window. He is looking off right, and backs cautiously into room, his eyes obviously glued to something off-stage.)

JOSE (*sharply*). Senor!

OTIS (*startled, gasping, turns in alarm, as his knees buckle*). Oh—.

JOSE (*center*). What is de matter, Senor? Have you seen something?

(ETHEL enters from door left.)

OTIS (*trying to speak, gulps, swallows, and points toward window, fearfully*). I—er—ugh.

JOSE. Caramba—and leetle feeshes! Have you seen de ghost?

OTIS (*at last, finding his voice, which is small and quavering*). No, I've seen my WIFE. (*Trembles as he eyes window anxiously*.)

ETHEL (*to JOSE*). Goodness, the man actually talks!

JOSE (*to OTIS*). You say you have seen your wife? For de first time?

ETHEL (*explaining*). They've had a little misunderstanding, Jose.

JOSE (*smiling, amused*). Oh, so dat is eet?

OTIS (*nods, eyes on window*). Yes—.

JOSE (*helpfully*). Bah! You Americans! You are like jelly. You do not know how to treat de wives. Be a man, my fran, assert yourself. Stand up to her and tell her who is de master.

OTIS (*apprehensively*). Oh, she knows who is the master.

JOSE (*to ETHEL*). Look at him. Look at de knees knock knock. (*To OTIS*.) Is dat de way for a red-blood man to act? NO. Show her you are de boss. Put her in her place.

OTIS (*horrified*). Oh, I couldn't do that.

ETHEL (*turning to left, half to herself*). No—it's too warm there—.

JOSE (*using OTIS' tone*). Oh, I couldn't do dat—I couldn't do dat. Bah! (*Turns to ETHEL*.) I ask you, Senorita, look at him. Like de worms what crawl and squirm. (*To OTIS*.)

Do not crawl, roar like a lion, be de king of de beasts and de head of de family. I betcha your life you will put her in de place. (*Snaps fingers recklessly.*) Give her dees. (*Snaps them again.*) Den you say, "Well, my beauty, what you gonna do now, huh?"

ETHEL. She's no beauty.

JOSE (*repeating business snapping fingers*). Don't forget, my fran, give her dees. Be a man.

OTIS. Oh, I couldn't give her this—(*Attempts to snap his fingers, and is startled when he succeeds. He tries again and succeeds, quite pleased with himself. He practices it a few times.*) Well, it worked. (*Smiles at JOSE, ETHEL amused.*)

JOSE. To be sure eet works. (*Snaps fingers.*) Remember: Right under her nose. (*Snaps fingers.*) And say, "Go home, woman, you annoy me. Go home." Dat is de way. Just say, "Wilt, woman, wilt."

ETHEL (*jokingly*). Jose, you're positively brutal.

JOSE. No, I am a man. De blood of de—

ETHEL (*interrupting quickly*). Yes, yes, I know.

OTIS (*who is practicing the snap, quite pleased with himself*). By golly, that's wonderful. I think I got it now. (*Faces front, rehearsing his lines.*) "Go home, woman, you annoy me!" (*Turns to JOSE, all smiles.*) Ha—!

JOSE. Good. Now you are de man.

OTIS (*carried away with the idea, goes on running over what he intends to say*). After all woman, what have I done? (*Faces front.*) Nothing. It is time you were put in your place—. (*MRS. OLEANDER enters from window, sees him and comes down to his right.*) I am the king of the beasts. I eat 'em alive! Well, my beauty, what are you gonna do about it, huh? (*Turns to his right, smiling broadly, sees MRS. OLEANDER, and with a gasp sinks to his knees.*)

MRS. OLEANDER. SO! The king of the beasts, eh? (*She lifts bric-a-brac to a threatening position.*)

JOSE (*as OTIS helplessly stutters without emitting a sound.*). Don't forget, fran—(*snapping fingers*)—give her dees.

OTIS (*on knees, frantically trying to snap his fingers behind his back, but it doesn't work*). Oh, dear, oh, dear me—.

MRS. OLEANDER. Get up on your feet, you wretch. (*OTIS rises, with an appealing look at JOSE.*) Now then, where is

your harem? You two-faced, double-dyed deceiver. I'm going to see my lawyer.

JOSE (*to OTIS*). Don't forget—. (*Snaps fingers*.)

OTIS (*appealingly*). It won't work—(*Snaps fingers loudly, surprising himself*.) It worked! (*Turns to MRS. OLEANDER*.) And that means I am a man! Go home, woman, go home. You annoy me!

MRS. OLEANDER (*almost speechless*). WHAT?

OTIS (*snapping fingers under her nose, bravely*). You heard me. Go home. (*He moves toward her, she backs over left around table to enter, OTIS following as he speaks*.) That's where you belong. Crawl like a worm just as I did for fifteen years. Wilt, woman, wilt! (*MRS. OLEANDER backs into chair left of table and sits suddenly*.)

MRS. OLEANDER (*surprised, speechless, breathless*). Oh—oh! I'm at a loss for words.

ETHEL (*pointedly*). But not for long, I'm sure.

OTIS (*winking at JOSE*). How'm I doing?

JOSE (*applauding*). Bravo, my fran, bravo!

OTIS (*is center now*). I'm going to put you in your place, woman.

MRS. OLEANDER (*on the verge of tears*). Otis Oleander, how can you talk to me like that after all these years?

OTIS (*enjoying himself*). How can I? (*Smiles at JOSE*.) I only wish I'd tried it before. (*Turns to MRS. OLEANDER*.) Now I guess you know who is master—(*Attempts to snap fingers, but fails; he turns to Jose questioningly, vainly trying to snap*.) Oh—oh, dear. Oh—I—guess—(*Looks helplessly at MRS. OLEANDER, and she, sensing his change of attitude, rises*.)—I wasn't meant for a cave man—.

MRS. OLEANDER (*again the tyrant*). I'll tell the world you weren't. No, you—.

(*OTIS, who has been sadly looking at his fingers as he attempts to snap them, jumps, startled, as JOSE—behind him—loudly snaps his for OTIS. OTIS again lights up with joy*.)

OTIS. HA! Not so fast, woman, not so fast. Sit down! (*She flops into chair*.) You haven't heard the half of it.

ETHEL. He's right, Mrs. Oleander, you haven't. If you didn't talk so much, you might hear better.

OTIS (*enjoying himself*). Yes, you talk too much.

ETHEL. I've learned the truth about Marmaduke and there's positively nothing to it. SALLY is a motorboat.

MRS. OLEANDER. A motorboat?

OTIS. A motorboat. (*Imitates boat.*) Put—put—put—put—
— (*Laughs at his own antics.*)

ETHEL. And as for your attitude toward your husband. Those girls came here with Miss June Day. It was all a little joke, and your husband never saw them before.

MRS. OLEANDER (*miserably*). Oh, Otis! Oh, dear, I'm so unhappy—

OTIS. Then you know how I've felt for fifteen years.

MRS. OLEANDER. Oh, Otis, I'm so sorry. (*Rises.*) And I'll never do it again.

OTIS (*relieved, turns, smiles at Jose*). Then I forgive you — (*Jose shakes his head.*) NO. Not yet. Wilt, woman, wilt.

MRS. OLEANDER. Oh, Otis, I'm wilting.

OTIS. Then go home, woman, go home. (*She goes to the arch as he follows her.*)

MRS. OLEANDER (*turns to window*). Yes, Otis, dear, and after this I'll believe everything you tell me. (*She goes out window to right.*)

OTIS (*turning at window*). Ha, there's a lot of snap (*Snaps fingers.*) in the old boy yet. (*Goes out right, proudly.*)

(*Jose laughs and Ethel joins him.*)

ETHEL. Jose, you're a wonder.

JOSE (*going to her at left center*). And now, Ethel—may I call you Ethel? Dees ees de moment I have long wait for. (*Kneels.*) See, I kneel at your feet. I bow to your beauty—

ETHEL (*uneasily*). Oh, Jose—

JOSE (*taking her hand*). You are de flower of all womanhood—(*Kisses her hand, as Donna enters from door left, stops in amazement. She is followed by Jessie, Gracie, June, Hazel and Marmaduke. Hazel crosses back to over right. Girls remain left. Donna comes to left center, Marmaduke and June up-stage.*)

DONNA (*sharply*). JOSE!

JOSE. What de—

DONNA (*accusingly*). Jose Pietra, what are you doing here?

JOSE (*confused, starts looking around on floor*). Caramba—I—er—I have lose something.

DONNA. Have you lost your mind? What's the meaning of this?

ETHEL. What do YOU mean bursting in here like this?

DONNA. What do I mean? Ask him what I mean.

ETHEL. Jose, what does she mean?

JOSE (*still searching the floor*). No speaka de English.

DONNA. And you can drop that phoney accent, Jose Pietra.

ETHEL. Phoney?

DONNA. Yes, phoney. Now, Jose, explain.

JOSE (*stuttering*). I—er—ah—you see, my dear—.

ETHEL (*laughing*). Is dat de way for a red-blood man to talk? (*Imitates Jose, snaps fingers.*) I ask you? Bah, worm! Do not crawl, roar like de lion! (*She laughs uproariously.*)

DONNA. What in the world is she raving about?

ETHEL (*going on, snapping fingers*). Give her dees. (*Snaps fingers.*) And say, "Woman, go home, you annoy me." (*Laughs, as Jose groans.*) Oh, Jose, this is good!

DONNA. I don't know what this is all about. Jose, what are you doing crawling around on your hands and knees like an infant?

JOSE (*drops accent*). Well, dear, it's very embarrassing.

DONNA (*indignantly*). You're telling me!

JOSE (*rising*). If I could talk to you alone.

WARNING: DOOR BELL

DONNA. Anything you have to say can be said right here.

JOSE (*as ETHEL enjoys watching Jose squirm*). But that's impossible.

(*JACK enters from stairs with OSCAR. OSCAR has been touched up, and shows only faint signs of his battle with JOSE.*)

JACK. What's the matter now? (*Goes to right center, OSCAR back of table.*) What's going on?

ETHEL (*amused*). Plenty, my boy, plenty.

OSCAR. And I'M not in it. It's a miracle.

DOOR BELL

ETHEL (*excitedly*). THAT must be Alexis! (*Speaking rapidly.*) Now listen, all, not a word about what has happened here tonight. I shan't have Alexis embarrassed. TRY and act like ladies and gentlemen.

GRACIE (*giggling*). Oh, I'll try.

INEZ (*coming to right of arch, speaking to* ETHEL). Alexis Boris, ma'am.

ETHEL. Show him in, show him in. (*INEZ exits arch to left.*) Oh, wait till you see him! Alexis is the essence of etiquette.

POSITIONS

OSCAR	MARM.	JUNE	JESSIE
HAZEL	JACK	JOSE DONNA	ETHEL GRACIE

(*INEZ comes to right of arch, ushering on* ALEXIS.)

(*ALEXIS enters and walks down to between* ETHEL *and* DONNA *at left center. He is a good-looking, gentlemanly boy, his age anywhere from eleven to fifteen. He dresses neatly in dark suit, white shirt and flowing tie. He is hatless.*)

ETHEL (*offering her hand*). Alexis!

(*ALL stare, wide-eyed and breathless.*)

ALEXIS (*shaking hands and smiling engagingly*). How do you do, Mrs. Van Della?

ETHEL (*aware of the others' surprise and hugely enjoying it*). I'm well, Alexis. And I'm so happy your mother saw fit to allow you to come.

OSCAR (*facing front, stupidly*). Well, I'm a grasshopper's springboard!

JOSE (*also facing front*). Caramba—(*Donna nudges him warningly.*)—I mean—what do you know about that?

ALEXIS (*turning to others and seeing* HAZEL *over right, bows to her*). How do you do, Mrs. Barlow?

HAZEL. Fine, thank you, Alexis.

ETHEL (*to* ALEXIS). You're staying for dinner, of course, Alexis. I know it's a little late, but I'd love to have you.

ALEXIS. Thank you, Mrs. Van Della, but I fear I must decline. Mother is alone tonight and expects me. She sent

her kindest regards and apologies for not coming. Some other time perhaps. (*Smiles.*)

ETHEL (*apologetically*). Oh, how stupid of me! I'm quite upset. (*To others.*) Allow me—. This is my friend, Alexis Boris. (*ALEXIS bows.*) We met abroad. Alexis and his mother are wintering in Miami.

ALEXIS (*to ETHEL*). And I'm sure our stay will be a pleasant one. And now—you will please excuse me. I mustn't keep mother waiting. (*Smiles pleasantly.*) You know how mothers are. (*Bows to others.*) Good-night. (*To ETHEL.*) We shall expect a visit from you soon, Mrs. Van Della.

ETHEL. Yes, Alexis, quite soon.

ALEXIS (*bowing*). Then good-night. (*Goes to arch.*)

ETHEL. Give my love to your mother.

ALEXIS. Thank you, I shall. Good-night. (*He goes out to left, as they all stand motionless, quiet.*)

OSCAR (*as slight pause*). How still and peaceful it seems.

ETHEL (*laughing*). Well, what do you think of him? Isn't he precious?

JACK. Yes, but—but I thought—.

MARMADUKE (*cutting in*). And I thought—.

ETHEL (*laughing*). I'm sure I know what you both thought. I know everything. Do you think I'm blind? I realized from the moment I stepped in this house what was up. (*Laughs.*)

JACK. But, Auntie, we didn't know—.

ETHEL (*enjoying it*). You didn't know that Alexis was—well, Alexis. I know what you had in mind and I know why Oscar and Jose are here—.

JOSE. But, Mrs. Van Della—.

DONNA (*sharply*). Shut up! Let the lady talk.

JOSE (*meekly*). Yes, my dear—.

ETHEL. But I'm not going to talk. I have nothing to explain. But as for you, Jack, and you, Marmaduke—. (*They sadly quail.*)

(*JACK and MARMADUKE groan softly.*)

ETHEL (*smiling*). I have you both to thank for a very novel and very exciting evening. I've enjoyed every minute of it.

OSCAR (*dryly*). Well, I haven't—.

HAZEL (*laughing*). We certainly have had fun with you children.

ETHEL. We've just been playing up to your scheme to see how far you would carry it.

OSCAR (*quickly*). Oh, I wouldn't carry it far.

JACK (*astonished*). Then you're not angry?

ETHEL (*laughing, good-naturedly*). Why should I be angry? I've had a hilarious time. After all, the joke is on YOU. And I wouldn't for the world want to have missed seeing the expressions on your faces when Alexis walked in. (*Laughs lightly.*)

OSCAR. Yeah—that *was* funny!

DONNA (*to JOSE*). That's all very well, but, Jose Pietra, you haven't explained what you are doing here.

JOSE (*pleadingly*). But, Donna, I can explain—.

ETHEL (*laughing*). Wilt, woman, wilt—. I am *de man*. (*Laughs as HAZEL joins her.*)

DONNA (*questioningly, to ETHEL*). What?

ETHEL. That's just a little joke of mine. I'll explain it all to you later at dinner.

GRACIE (*giggling, to JESSIE*). WE EAT!

ETHEL (*looking around*). Of course, I want you all to stay for dinner.

JESSIE. Thanks. We were—(*checking herself*)—was—are.

MARMADUKE (*elated*). Aunt Ethel, you are a brick.

ETHEL (*pointedly*). Yes, I know. A GOLD brick. (*They all laugh. She turns to JUNE.*) Young lady, keep your eye on that rascal.

JACK (*crossing to ETHEL*). While you're in such good humor, I think this would be the ideal time to present my fiancée—(*Extends hand to INEZ, who comes down to between JACK and ETHEL.*)

ETHEL. What? The maid?

JACK (*hastily*). Oh—she isn't really a maid. She's—she's really nobody—I mean, she took the job as maid so that you could get used to her gradually.

ETHEL (*with a hand to her head*). Oh—this is too much. Let's have dinner.

JACK (*eagerly*). Then everything is all right?

ETHEL. Yes, yes, everything is all right. I know who your

fiancee is—I know who Marmaduke's fiancee is—I know who Jose is—I know who Oscar is—I know everything.

JOSE. But *I* don't know where my pants are.

JACK (*laughing, crossing left to door with INEZ, JOSE and DONNA following.*) I'll explain all about that later. It's all a part of the joke on us. You'll die laughing.

OSCAR (*sotto voce*). Yes, we hope—

ETHEL (*motioning them all to left*). Come, everybody, let's go in to dinner. (*They all start toward left, talking together, laughing and generally ad libbing.*)

DONNA (*to JOSE*). The next time I catch you posing as a Spanish bull fighter, I'll give you something to fight—and it won't be a bull.

ETHEL (*as they saunter toward left, talking and laughing*). Go right along, everybody. (*They are about to exit when from off right, at window, the voice of OTIS is heard, yelling painfully. He approaches as they all stand and stare at window, exchanging exclamations of surprise.*) Who's that?

ALL (*as OTIS enters and comes to center, he is holding his hands over his face*). OLEANDER!

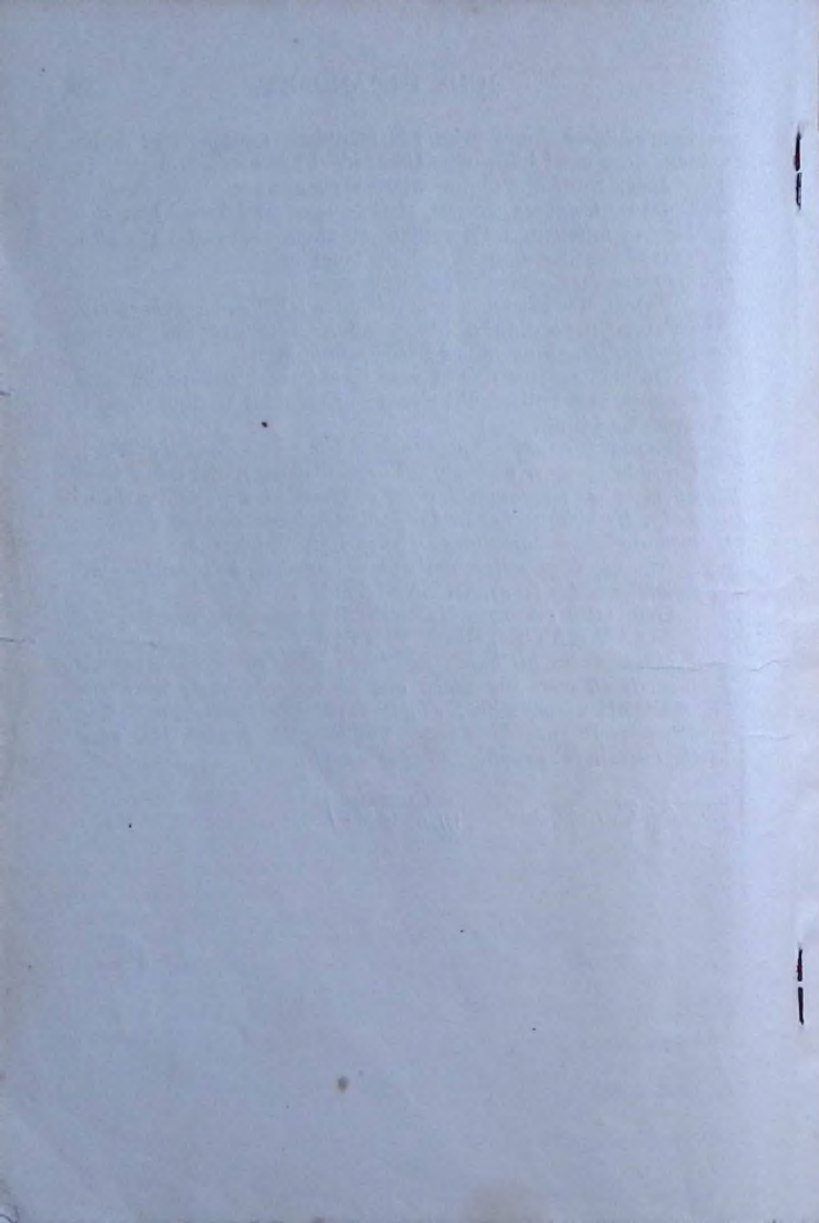
OTIS (*still covering his face*). Oh, dear—oh, dear—.

ALL. WHAT'S THE MATTER?

(*OTIS drops his hands and looks up at them, exposing his face. Both eyes are black and he has obviously been the victim of an irate wife. He looks at them helplessly, and feebly attempts to snap his fingers, but fails. He repeats this until the curtain falls swiftly. They all laugh.*)

CURTAIN

Left.
Wally White.



Hobgoblin House

—by—

JAY TOBIAS

A Mystery Farce in 3 Acts—6 Men, 6 Women

SCENE: One Interior

No doubt you've seen plays that have fairly made your flesh creep—we all have, but oh, ye shades of Caesar's ghost! Here's one that tops them all—a play that will send ice-cold shivers down the spine and make every hair stand on end. But for every thrill there's a hearty laugh. Miss Priscilla Carter is peeved because her two nieces have fallen in love with two "silly young nincompoops." She purchases the grim old Hobgood House in the foot hills of the Ozarks and here in the seclusion of the mountains she plans a safe retreat where the girls shall not see their lovers for at least six months on penalty of being disinherited. And what a mess they get into—ghosts and ghostly doings everywhere. Just as luck would have it they arrive on the very night that old Bluebeard Bronson, who once committed a murder in the house, is supposed to revisit the scene of his crimes. And does he come? Well, at any rate there are some strange happenings on this night of nights. When things are at their height, the boys arrive—just in time to rescue the family from a desperate band of crooks. Not till then does Miss Priscilla relent. All parts in this captivating play are good. The characters include: The crochety Miss Priscilla; the determined nieces, Marion and Jill; the brave but fun-loving boys, Frank Harlow and Jack Loring; Susan, the "Henglish 'ousekeeper"; Henry Goober and Delilah Worts, two as comical darkies as you've ever seen; old Darius Krupp, the ancient caretaker of the Hobgoblin House; Bluebeard Bronson, the escaped "maniac";—Bill Williams, his keeper; and then—"The Headless Phantom." This play is sure to make a hit anywhere. 2 hrs. 50 cents.

THE WILLIS N. BUGBEE CO.

SYRACUSE, N. Y.

Everybody's Getting Married

—by—

WILLIAM RUSSELL MOORE

A Comedy in 3 Acts—7 Men, 7 Women

SCENE: One Simple Interior

At the opening of this play, Reginald D'Arcy receives a letter from his lawyers announcing that he is the sole heir to his Aunt Agatha's million dollar estate on certain conditions. Aye, and there's the rub! Listen! It seems that his aunt had operated a Matrimonial Bureau and had on her books the names of six women for whom she had contracted to find husbands. The terms of the will now require that he fulfill this contract within one month from the time this notice is received. Otherwise the million dollars goes to The Home for Crippled Cats. Think of it—only one month to provide six husbands! Reginald enlists the help of his friend, Dean Garrett, who proves to be a real business genius. And then, of course, he is assisted by James, his valet. The names of the six women are as follows: Mrs. Lancaster, a rich widow; Mrs. Hardin, another widow, not so rich; Marie Blake, a business girl; Miss Effie Cramer, a spinster; Dulcey Lane, an actress; and Mrs. O'Leary, an Irish washwoman—and a very lively and determined bunch of women they are. But where to find six husbands! Well, here are three gentlemen of fortune who figure prominently in the deal: "Floppy" Smith, "Tip" McCarthy and "Spike" Jones. The others we leave to your imagination. We advise you not to buy this for a serious play. It's so full of laughs that you couldn't possibly crowd another in. That's why it's in the Beacon Series. Full eve. 50 cents.

THE WILLIS N. BUGBEE CO.

SYRACUSE, N. Y.